

ANARCHISM:

From Theory to Practice

Daniel Guérin

Part 1:

In Search of a New Society

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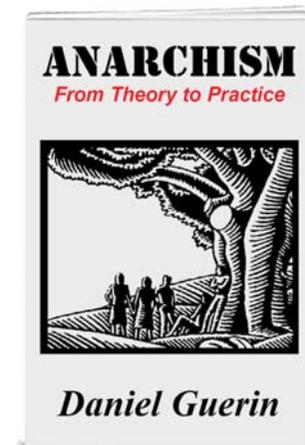
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Introduction by Noam Chomsky

A French writer, sympathetic to anarchism, wrote in the 1890s that “anarchism has a broad back, like paper it endures anything” - including, he noted those whose acts are such that “a mortal enemy of anarchism could not have done better.”¹ There have been many styles of thought and action that have been referred to as “anarchist.” It would be hopeless to try to encompass all of these conflicting tendencies in some general theory or ideology. And even if we proceed to extract from the history of libertarian thought a living, evolving tradition, as Daniel Guérin does in *Anarchism*, it remains difficult to formulate its doctrines as a specific and determinate theory of society and social change. The anarchist historian Rudolph Rocker, who presents a systematic conception of the development of anarchist thought towards anarcho-syndicalism, along lines that bear comparison to Guérin’s work, puts the matter well when he writes that anarchism is not

*a fixed, self-enclosed social system but rather a definite trend in the historic development of mankind, which, in contrast with the intellectual guardianship of all clerical and governmental institutions, strives for the free unhindered unfolding of all the individual and social forces in life. Even freedom is only a relative, not an absolute concept, since it tends constantly to become broader and to affect wider circles in more manifold ways. For the anarchist, freedom is not an abstract philosophical concept, but the vital concrete possibility for every human being to bring to full development all the powers, capacities, and talents with which nature has endowed him, and turn them to social account. The less this natural development of man is influenced by ecclesiastical or political guardianship, the more efficient and harmonious will human personality become, the more will it become the measure of the intellectual culture of the society in which it has grown.*²

7. All quotations have been translated into English by the translator.
8. French writer (1830–1905) known principally as a geographer. His brother Elie played an active part during the Commune of 1871. (Translator’s note.)
9. Wilhelm Weitling (1808–1871), German utopian communist writer and founder of Communist Workers’ Clubs during the 1830’s and 1840’s. (Translator’s note.)
10. Guizot, a minister under Louis Philippe, was known for his extreme conservative views. (Translator’s note)
11. Followers of Auguste Blanqui (1805–1881), French socialist and revolutionary’ advocate of insurrection by minorities. (Translator’s note.)
12. In his book *The Ego and Its Own*.
13. Without direct mention of Stirner, whose work he may not, therefore, have read.
14. Cf. the 1963 decrees by which the Algerian Republic institutionalized the self-management which had been originated spontaneously by the peasants. The apportionment — if not the actual percentages — is very similar, and the last quarter, “to be divided among tile workers,” is the same as the “balance” over which there was controversy in Algeria.
15. Alleu is a feudal term for heritable inalienable property. The Germans were a German tribe in which individual freedom was highly developed. (Translator’s note.)
16. Cf. a similar discussion in the Critique of the Gotha Programme, drafted by Karl Marx in 1875 though not published until 1891.
17. Cuba is today gropingly and prematurely trying to find the way to integral communism.
18. A state monopoly in France. (Translator’s note.)
19. A Swiss branch of the International which had adopted Bakunin’s ideas.
20. Pi y Margall was a minister in the period between 1873 and 1874 when a republic was briefly established in Spain. (Translator’s note.) When, in January 1937, Fedenca Montseny, a woman anarchist who had become a minister, praised the legionalism of Pi y Margall, Gaston Leval replied that he was far from a faithful follower of Bakunin.

Footnotes:

1. Authoritarian was an epithet used by the libertarian anarchists and denoted those socialists whom they considered less libertarian than themselves and who they therefore presumed were in favour of authority.
2. Jules Guesde (1845–1922) in 1879 introduced Marxist ideas to the French workers' movement. (Translator's note.)
3. The term *sociétaire* is used to define a form of anarchism which repudiates individualism and aims at integration into society. (Translator's note.)
4. "Voline" was the pseudonym of V. M. Eichenbaum, author of *La Revolution Inconnue 1917–1921*, the third volume of which is in English as *The Unknown Revolution* (1955). Another partial translation is *Nineteen-seventeen: The Russian Revolution Betrayed* (1954). (Translator's note.)
5. Alias of the French terrorist Francois-Claudius Koenigstein (1859–1892) who committed many acts of violent terrorism and was eventually executed. (Translator's note.)
6. In 1883 an active nucleus of revolutionary socialists founded an International Working Men's Association in the United States. They were under the influence of the International Anarchist Congress, held in London in 1881, and also of Johann Most, a social democrat turned anarchist, who reached America in 1882. Albert R. Parsons and Adolph Fischer were the moving spirits in the association, which took the lead in a huge mass movement concentrated on winning an eight-hour day. The campaign for this was launched by the trade unions and the Knights of Labour, and May 1, 1886, was fixed as the deadline for bringing the eight-hour day into force. During the first half of May, a nationwide strike involved 190,000 workers of whom 80,000 were in Chicago. Impressive mass demonstrations occurred in that city on May 1 and for several days thereafter. Panic-stricken and terrified by this wave of rebellion, the bourgeoisie resolved to crush the movement at its source, resorting to bloody provocation if need be. During a street meeting on May 4, 1885, in Haymarket Square, a bomb thrown at the legs of the police in an unexplained manner provided the necessary pretext. Eight leaders of the revolutionary and libertarian socialist movement were arrested, seven of them sentenced to death, and four subsequently hanged (a fifth committed suicide in his cell the day before the execution). Since then the Chicago martyrs — Parsons, Fischer, Enge], Spies, and Lingg — have belonged to the international proletariat, and the universal celebration of May Day (May 1) still commemorates the atrocious crime committed in the United States.

One might ask what value there is in studying a "definite trend in the historic development of mankind" that does not articulate a specific and detailed social theory. Indeed, many commentators dismiss anarchism as utopian, formless, primitive, or otherwise incompatible with the realities of a complex society. One might, however, argue rather differently: that at every stage of history our concern must be to dismantle those forms of authority and oppression that survive from an era when they might have been justified in terms of the need for security or survival or economic development, but that now contribute to - rather than alleviate - material and cultural deficit. If so, there will be no doctrine of social change fixed for the present and future, nor even, necessarily, a specific and unchanging concept of the goals towards which social change should tend. Surely our understanding of the nature of man or of the range of viable social forms is so rudimentary that any far-reaching doctrine must be treated with great scepticism, just as scepticism is in order when we hear that "human nature" or "the demands of efficiency" or "the complexity of modern life" requires this or that form of oppression and autocratic rule.

Nevertheless, at a particular time there is every reason to develop, insofar as our understanding permits, a specific realization of this definite trend in the historic development of mankind, appropriate to the tasks of the moment. For Rocker, "the problem that is set for our time is that of freeing man from the curse of economic exploitation and political and social enslavement"; and the method is not the conquest and exercise of state power, nor stultifying parliamentarianism, but rather "to reconstruct the economic life of the peoples from the ground up and build it up in the spirit of Socialism."

But only the producers themselves are fitted for this task, since they are the only value-creating element in society out of which a new future can arise. Theirs must be the task of freeing labour from all the fetters which economic exploitation has fastened on it, of freeing society from all the institutions and procedure of political power, and of opening the way to an alliance of free groups of men and women based on co-operative labour and a planned administration of things in the interest of the community. To prepare the toiling masses in the city and country for this great goal and to bind them together as a militant force is the objective of modern Anarcho-syndicalism, and in this its whole purpose is exhausted. [P. 108]

As a socialist, Rocker would take for granted “that the serious, final, complete liberation of the workers is possible only upon one condition: that of the appropriation of capital, that is, of raw material and all the tools of labour, including land, by the whole body of the workers.”³ As an anarcho-syndicalist, he insists, further, that the workers’ organisations create “not only the ideas, but also the facts of the future itself” in the pre-revolutionary period, that they embody in themselves the structure of the future society - and he looks forward to a social revolution that will dismantle the state apparatus as well as expropriate the expropriators. “What we put in place of the government is industrial organisation.”

Anarcho-syndicalists are convinced that a Socialist economic order cannot be created by the decrees and statutes of a government, but only by the solidaric collaboration of the workers with hand and brain in each special branch of production; that is, through the taking over of the management of all plants by the producers themselves under such form that the separate groups, plants, and branches of industry are independent members of the general economic organism and systematically carry on production and the distribution of the products in the interest of the community on the basis of free mutual agreements. [p. 94]

Rocker was writing at a moment when such ideas had been put into practice in a dramatic way in the Spanish Revolution. Just prior to the outbreak of the revolution, the anarcho-syndicalist economist Diego Abad de Santillan had written:

...in facing the problem of social transformation, the Revolution cannot consider the state as a medium, but must depend on the organisation of producers.

We have followed this norm and we find no need for the hypothesis of a superior power to organised labour, in order to establish a new order of things. We would thank anyone to point out to us what function, if any, the State can have in an economic organisation, where private property has been abolished and in which parasitism and special privilege have no place. The suppression of the State cannot be a languid affair; it must be the task of the Revolution to finish with the State. Either the Revolution gives social wealth to the producers in which case the producers organise themselves for due collective distribution and the State has nothing to do; or the

19. Marx, *Capital*, cited by Avineri, *Social and Political Thought of Marx*, p. 83.
20. Pelloutier, “L’Anarchisme.”
21. “Qu’est-ce que la propriété?” The phrase “property is theft” displeased Marx, who saw in its use a logical problem, theft presupposing the legitimate existence of property. See Avineri, *Social and Political Thought of Marx*.
22. Cited in Buber’s *Paths in Utopia*, p. 19.
23. Cited in J. Hampden Jackson, *Marx, Proudhon and European Socialism*, p. 60.
24. Karl Marx, *The Civil War in France*, p. 24. Avineri observes that this and other comments of Marx about the Commune refer pointedly to intentions and plans. As Marx made plain elsewhere, his considered assessment was more critical than in this address.
25. For some background, see Walter Kendall, *The Revolutionary Movement in Britain*.
26. *Collectivisations: L’Oeuvre constructive de la Révolution espagnole*, p. 8.
27. For discussion, see Mattick, *Marx and Keynes*, and Michael Kidron, *Western Capitalism Since the War*. See also discussion and references cited in my *At War with Asia*, chap. 1, pp. 23-6.
28. See Hugh Scanlon, *The Way Forward for Workers’ Control*. Scanlon is the president of the AEF, one of Britain’s largest trade unions. The institute was established as a result of the sixth Conference on Workers’ Control, March 1968, and serves as a centre for disseminating information and encouraging research.
29. Guérin, *Ni Dieu, ni Maître*, introduction.
30. *Ibid.*
31. Arthur Rosenberg, *A History of Bolshevism*, p. 88.
32. Marx, *Civil War in France*, pp. 62-3.

above, from a privileged minority of conceited intellectuals, who imagine that they know what the people need and want better than do the people themselves...." "But the people will feel no better if the stick with which they are being beaten is labelled 'the people's stick' " (*Statism and Anarchy* [1873], in Dolgoff, *Bakunin on Anarchy*, p. 338) - "the people's stick" being the democratic Republic.

Marx, of course, saw the matter differently.

For discussion of the impact of the Paris Commune on this dispute, see Daniel Guérin's comments in *Ni Dieu, ni Maître*; these also appear, slightly extended, in his *Pour un marxisme libertaire*. See also note 24.

10. On Lenin's "intellectual deviation" to the left during 1917, see Robert Vincent Daniels, "The State and Revolution: a Case Study in the Genesis and Transformation of Communist Ideology," *American Slavic and East European Review*, vol. 12, no. 1 (1953).
11. Paul Mattick, *Marx and Keynes*, p. 295.
12. Michael Bakunin, "La Commune de Paris et la notion de l'état," reprinted in Guérin, *Ni Dieu, ni Maître*. Bakunin's final remark on the laws of individual nature as the condition of freedom can be compared to the creative thought developed in the rationalist and romantic traditions. See my *Cartesian Linguistics and Language and Mind*.
13. Shlomo Avineri, *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx*, p. 142, referring to comments in *The Holy Family*. Avineri states that within the socialist movement only the Israeli *kibbutzim* "have perceived that the modes and forms of present social organisation will determine the structure of future society." This, however, was a characteristic position of anarcho-syndicalism, as noted earlier.
14. Rocker, *Anarcho-syndicalism*, p. 28.
15. See Guérin's works cited earlier.
16. Karl Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*.
17. Karl Marx, *Grundrisse der Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie*, cited by Mattick, *Marx and Keynes*, p. 306. In this connection, see also Mattick's essay "Workers' Control," in Priscilla Long, ed., *The New Left*; and Avineri, *Social and Political Thought of Marx*.
18. Karl Marx, *Capital*, quoted by Robert Tucker, who rightly emphasizes that Marx sees the revolutionary more as a "frustrated producer" than a "dissatisfied consumer" (*The Marxian Revolutionary Idea*). This more radical critique of capitalist relations of production is a direct outgrowth of the libertarian thought of the Enlightenment.

Revolution does not give social wealth to the producers, in which case the Revolution has been a lie and the State would continue.

*Our federal council of economy is not a political power but an economic and administrative regulating power. It receives its orientation from below and operates in accordance with the resolutions of the regional and national assemblies. It is a liaison corps and nothing else.*⁴

Engels, in a letter of 1883, expressed his disagreement with this conception as follows:

*The anarchists put the thing upside down. They declare that the proletarian revolution must begin by doing away with the political organisation of the state....But to destroy it at such a moment would be to destroy the only organism by means of which the victorious proletariat can assert its newly-conquered power, hold down its capitalist adversaries, and carry out that economic revolution of society without which the whole victory must end in a new defeat and a mass slaughter of the workers similar to those after the Paris commune.*⁵

In contrast, the anarchists - most eloquently Bakunin - warned of the dangers of the "red bureaucracy," which would prove to be "the most vile and terrible lie that our century has created."⁶ The anarcho-syndicalist Fernand Pelloutier asked: "Must even the transitory state to which we have to submit necessarily and fatally be a collectivist jail? Can't it consist in a free organisation limited exclusively by the needs of production and consumption, all political institutions having disappeared?"⁷

I do not pretend to know the answers to this question. But it seems clear that unless there is, in some form, a positive answer, the chances for a truly democratic revolution that will achieve the humanistic ideals of the left are not great. Martin Buber put the problem succinctly when he wrote: "One cannot in the nature of things expect a little tree that has been turned into a club to put forth leaves."⁸ The question of conquest or destruction of state power is what Bakunin regarded as the primary issue dividing him from Marx.⁹ In one form or another, the problem has arisen repeatedly in the century since, dividing "libertarian" from "authoritarian" socialists.

Despite Bakunin's warnings about the red bureaucracy, and their fulfilment under Stalin's dictatorship, it would obviously be a gross

error in interpreting the debates of a century ago to rely on the claims of contemporary social movements as to their historical origins. In particular, it is perverse to regard Bolshevism as “Marxism in practice.” Rather, the left-wing critique of Bolshevism, taking account of the historical circumstances surrounding the Russian Revolution, is far more to the point.¹⁰

The anti-Bolshevik, left-wing labour movement opposed the Leninists because they did not go far enough in exploiting the Russian upheavals for strictly proletarian ends. They became prisoners of their environment and used the international radical movement to satisfy specifically Russian needs, which soon became synonymous with the needs of the Bolshevik Party-State. The “bourgeois” aspects of the Russian Revolution were now discovered in Bolshevism itself: Leninism was adjudged a part of international social-democracy, differing from the latter only on tactical issues.¹¹

If one were to seek a single leading idea within the anarchist tradition, it should, I believe, be that expressed by Bakunin when, in writing on the Paris Commune, he identified himself as follows:

I am a fanatic lover of liberty, considering it as the unique condition under which intelligence, dignity and human happiness can develop and grow; not the purely formal liberty conceded, measured out and regulated by the State, an eternal lie which in reality represents nothing more than the privilege of some founded on the slavery of the rest; not the individualistic, egoistic, shabby, and fictitious liberty extolled by the school of J.J. Rousseau and other schools of bourgeois liberalism, which considers the would-be rights of all men, represented by the State which limits the rights of each - an idea that leads inevitably to the reduction of the rights of each to zero. No, I mean the only kind of liberty that is worthy of the name, liberty that consists in the full development of all the material, intellectual and moral powers that are latent in each person; liberty that recognizes no restrictions other than those determined by the laws of our own individual nature, which cannot properly be regarded as restrictions since these laws are not imposed by any outside legislator beside or above us, but are immanent and inherent, forming the very basis of our material, intellectual and moral being - they do not limit us but are the real and immediate conditions of our freedom.¹²

Introduction Footnotes:

This essay is a revised version of the introduction to Daniel Guérin's *Anarchism: From Theory to Practice*. In a slightly different version, it appeared in the *New York Review of Books*, May 21, 1970.

1. Octave Mirbeau, quoted in James Joll, *The Anarchists*, pp. 145-6.
2. Rudolf Rocker, *Anarcho-syndicalism*, p. 31.
3. Cited by Rocker, *ibid.*, p. 77. This quotation and that in the next sentence are from Michael Bakunin, “The Program of the Alliance,” in Sam Dolgoff, ed. and trans., *Bakunin on Anarchy*, p. 255.
4. Diego Abad de Santillan, *After the Revolution*, p. 86. In the last chapter, written several months after the revolution had begun, he expresses his dissatisfaction with what had so far been achieved along these lines. On the accomplishments of the social revolution in Spain, see my *American Power and the New Mandarins*, chap. 1, and references cited there; the important study by Broué and Témime has since been translated into English. Several other important studies have appeared since, in particular: Frank Mintz, *L'Autogestion dans l'Espagne révolutionnaire* (Paris: Editions Bélibaste, 1971); César M. Lorenzo, *Les Anarchistes espagnols et le pouvoir, 1868-1969* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1969); Gaston Leval, *Espagne libertaire, 1936-1939: L'Oeuvre constructive de la Révolution espagnole* (Paris: Editions du Cercle, 1971). See also Vernon Richards, *Lessons of the Spanish Revolution*, enlarged 1972 edition.
5. Cited by Robert C. Tucker, *The Marxian Revolutionary Idea*, in his discussion of Marxism and anarchism.
6. Bakunin, in a letter to Herzen and Ogareff, 1866. Cited by Daniel Guérin, *Jeunesse du socialisme libertaire*, p. 119.
7. Fernand Pelloutier, cited in Joll, *Anarchists*. The source is “L'Anarchisme et les syndicats ouvriers,” *Les Temps nouveaux*, 1895. The full text appears in Daniel Guérin, ed., *Ni Dieu, ni Maître*, an excellent historical anthology of anarchism.
8. Martin Buber, *Paths in Utopia*, p. 127.
9. “No state, however democratic,” Bakunin wrote, “not even the reddest republic - can ever give the people what they really want, i.e., the free self-organisation and administration of their own affairs from the bottom upward, without any interference or violence from above, because every state, even the pseudo-People's State concocted by Mr. Marx, is in essence only a machine ruling the masses from

Bakunin foresaw that decolonization would be followed by an ever-expanding federation of revolutionary peoples: "The future lies initially with the creation of a European-American international unit. Later, much later, this great European-American nation will merge with the African and Asiatic units."

This analysis brings us straight into the middle of the twentieth century.

These ideas grew out of the Enlightenment; their roots are in Rousseau's *Discourse on Inequality*, Humboldt's *Limits of State Action*, Kant's insistence, in his defence of the French Revolution, that freedom is the precondition for acquiring the maturity for freedom, not a gift to be granted when such maturity is achieved. With the development of industrial capitalism, a new and unanticipated system of injustice, it is libertarian socialism that has preserved and extended the radical humanist message of the Enlightenment and the classical liberal ideals that were perverted into an ideology to sustain the emerging social order. In fact, on the very same assumptions that led classical liberalism to oppose the intervention of the state in social life, capitalist social relations are also intolerable. This is clear, for example, from the classic work of Humboldt, *The Limits of State Action*, which anticipated and perhaps inspired Mill. This classic of liberal thought, completed in 1792, is in its essence profoundly, though prematurely, anti-capitalist. Its ideas must be attenuated beyond recognition to be transmuted into an ideology of industrial capitalism.

Humboldt's vision of a society in which social fetters are replaced by social bonds and labour is freely undertaken suggests the early Marx., with his discussion of the "alienation of labour when work is external to the worker...not part of his nature...[so that] he does not fulfil himself in his work but denies himself...[and is] physically exhausted and mentally debased," alienated labour that "casts some of the workers back into a barbarous kind of work and turns others into machines," thus depriving man of his "species character" of "free conscious activity" and "productive life." Similarly, Marx conceives of "a new type of human being who *needs* his fellow men....[The workers' association becomes] the real constructive effort to create the social texture of future human relations." ¹³ It is true that classical libertarian thought is opposed to state intervention in social life, as a consequence of deeper assumptions about the human need for liberty, diversity, and free association. On the same assumptions, capitalist relations of production, wage labour, competitiveness, the ideology of "possessive individualism" - all must be regarded as fundamentally antihuman. Libertarian socialism is properly to be regarded as the inheritor of the liberal ideals of the Enlightenment.

Rudolf Rocker describes modern anarchism as "the confluence of the two great currents which during and since the French revolution have found such characteristic expression in the intellectual life of Europe: Socialism and Liberalism." The classical liberal ideals, he argues, were wrecked on the realities of capitalist economic forms. Anarchism is necessarily

anti-capitalist in that it “opposes the exploitation of man by man.” But anarchism also opposes “the dominion of man over man.” It insists that “socialism will be free or it will not be at all. In its recognition of this lies the genuine and profound justification for the existence of anarchism.”¹⁴ From this point of view, anarchism may be regarded as the libertarian wing of socialism. It is in this spirit that Daniel Guérin has approached the study of anarchism in *Anarchism* and other works.¹⁵ Guérin quotes Adolph Fischer, who said that “every anarchist is a socialist but not every socialist is necessarily an anarchist.” Similarly, Bakunin, in his “anarchist manifesto” of 1865, the program of his projected international revolutionary fraternity, laid down the principle that each member must be, to begin with, a socialist.

A consistent anarchist must oppose private ownership of the means of production and the wage slavery which is a component of this system, as incompatible with the principle that labour must be freely undertaken and under the control of the producer. As Marx put it, socialists look forward to a society in which labour will “become not only a means of life, but also the highest want in life,”¹⁶ an impossibility when the worker is driven by external authority or need rather than inner impulse: “no form of wage-labour, even though one may be less obnoxious than another, can do away with the misery of wage-labour itself.”¹⁷ A consistent anarchist must oppose not only alienated labour but also the stupefying specialisation of labour that takes place when the means for developing production

*mutilate the worker into a fragment of a human being, degrade him to become a mere appurtenance of the machine, make his work such a torment that its essential meaning is destroyed; estrange from him the intellectual potentialities of the labour process in very proportion to the extent to which science is incorporated into it as an independent power...*¹⁸

Marx saw this not as an inevitable concomitant of industrialization, but rather as a feature of capitalist relations of production. The society of the future must be concerned to “replace the detail-worker of today... reduced to a mere fragment of a man, by the fully developed individual, fit for a variety of labours...to whom the different social functions...are but so many modes of giving free scope to his own natural powers.”¹⁹ The prerequisite is the abolition of capital and wage labour as social categories (not to speak of the industrial armies of the “labour state”

When the new city is ready to support itself it will itself declare its independence: by what right should the parent city presume to treat it as a vassal, as property to be exploited?

Thus, in our time we have seen the United States emancipate itself from England; and Canada likewise in fact, if not in name; Australia set out on the road to separation by the consent, and with the approval, of the mother country. In the same way Algeria will, sooner or later, constitute itself an African France unless for abominable, selfish motives we keep it as a single unit by means of force and poverty.”

Bakunin had an eye on the underdeveloped countries and doubted whether “imperialist Europe” could keep 800 million Asiatics in servitude. “Two-thirds of humanity, 800 million Asians asleep in their servitude will necessarily awaken and begin to move. But in what direction and to what end?” He declared “strong sympathy for any national uprising against any form of oppression” and commended to the subject peoples the fascinating example of the Spanish uprising against Napoleon. In spite of the fantastic disproportion between the native guerrillas and the imperial troops, the occupying power failed to put them down, and the French were driven out of Spain after a five-year struggle.

Every people “has the right to be itself and no one is entitled to impose its costume, its customs, its language, its opinions, or its laws.” However, Bakunin also believed that there could be no true federalism without socialism and wished that national liberation could be achieved “as much in the economic as in the political interests of the masses” and “not with ambitious intent to set up a powerful State.” Any revolution for national independence “will necessarily be against the people... if it is carried out without the people and must therefore depend for success on a privileged class,” and will thus become “a retrogressive, disastrous, counter-revolutionary movement.”

It would be regrettable if the decolonized countries were to cast off the foreign yoke only to fall into indigenous political or religious servitude. Their emancipation requires that “all faith in any divine or human authority be eradicated among the masses.” The national question is historically secondary to the social question and salvation depends on the social revolution. An isolated national revolution cannot succeed. The social revolution inevitably becomes a world revolution.

True internationalism rests on self-determination, which implies the right of secession. Following Proudhon, Bakunin propounded that “each individual, each association, commune, or province, each region and nation, has the absolute right to determine its own fate, to associate with others or not, to ally itself with whomever it will, or break any alliance, without regard to so-called historical claims or the convenience of its neighbours.” “The right to unite freely and separate with the same freedom is the most important of all political rights, without which confederation will always be disguised centralisation.”

Anarchists, however, did not regard this principle as leading to secession or isolation. On the contrary, they held “the conviction that once the right to secede is recognized, secession will, in fact, become impossible because national units will be freely established and no longer the product of violence and historical falsehood.” Then, and then only, will they become “truly strong, fruitful, and permanent.”

Later, Lenin, and the early congresses of the Third International, adopted this concept from Bakunin, and the Bolsheviks made it the foundation of their policy on nationalities and of their anti-colonialist strategy — until they eventually belied it to turn to authoritarian centralisation and disguised imperialism.

Decolonisation

It is noteworthy that logical deduction led the originators of federalism to a prophetic anticipation of the problems of decolonization. Proudhon distinguished the unit “based on conquest” from the “rational” unit and saw that “every organisation that exceeds its true limits and tends to invade or annex other organisations loses in strength what it gains in size, and moves toward dissolution.” The more a city (i.e., a nation) extends its population or its territory, the nearer it comes to tyranny and, finally, disruption:

“If it sets up subsidiaries or colonies some distance away, these subsidiaries or colonies will, sooner or later, change into new cities which will remain linked to the mother city only by federation, or not at all....”

or the various modern forms of totalitarianism since capitalism). The reduction of man to an appurtenance of the machine, a specialized tool of production, might in principle be overcome, rather than enhanced, with the proper development and use of technology, but not under the conditions of autocratic control of production by those who make man an instrument to serve their ends, overlooking his individual purposes, in Humboldt’s phrase.

Anarcho-syndicalists sought, even under capitalism, to create “free associations of free producers” that would engage in militant struggle and prepare to take over the organisation of production on a democratic basis. These associations would serve as “a practical school of anarchism.”²⁰ If private ownership of the means of production is, in Proudhon’s often quoted phrase, merely a form of “theft” - “the exploitation of the weak by the strong”²¹ - control of production by a state bureaucracy, no matter how benevolent its intentions, also does not create the conditions under which labour, manual and intellectual, can become the highest want in life. Both, then, must be overcome.

In his attack on the right of private or bureaucratic control over the means of production,, the anarchist takes his stand with those who struggle to bring about “the third and last emancipatory phase of history,” the first having made serfs out of slaves, the second having made wage earners out of serfs, and the third which abolishes the proletariat in a final act of liberation that places control over the economy in the hands of free and voluntary associations of producers (Fourier, 1848).²² The imminent danger to “civilization” was noted by de Tocqueville, also in 1848:

As long as the right of property was the origin and groundwork of many other rights, it was easily defended - or rather it was not attacked; it was then the citadel of society while all the other rights were its outworks; it did not bear the brunt of attack and, indeed, there was no serious attempt to assail it. but today, when the right of property is regarded as the last undestroyed remnant of the aristocratic world, when it alone is left standing, the sole privilege in an equalized society, it is a different matter. Consider what is happening in the hearts of the working-classes, although I admit they are quiet as yet. It is true that they are less inflamed than formerly by political passions properly speaking; but do you not see that their passions, far from being political, have become social?

*Do you not see that, little by little, ideas and opinions are spreading amongst them which aim not merely at removing such and such laws, such a ministry or such a government, but at breaking up the very foundations of society itself?*²³

The workers of Paris, in 1871, broke the silence, and proceeded

*to abolish property, the basis of all civilization! Yes, gentlemen, the Commune intended to abolish that class property which makes the labour of the many the wealth of the few. It aimed at the expropriation of the expropriators. It wanted to make individual property a truth by transforming the means of production, land and capital, now chiefly the means of enslaving and exploiting labour, into mere instruments of free and associated labour.*²⁴

The Commune, of course, was drowned in blood. The nature of the “civilization” that the workers of Paris sought to overcome in their attack on “the very foundations of society itself” was revealed, once again, when the troops of the Versailles government reconquered Paris from its population. As Marx wrote, bitterly but accurately:

The civilization and justice of bourgeois order comes out in its lurid light whenever the slaves and drudges of that order rise against their masters. Then this civilization and justice stand forth as undisguised savagery and lawless revenge... the infernal deeds of the soldiery reflect the innate spirit of that civilization of which they are the mercenary vindicators.... The bourgeoisie of the whole world, which looks complacently upon the wholesale massacre after the battle, is convulsed by horror at the destruction of brick and mortar. [Ibid., pp. 74, 77]

Despite the violent destruction of the Commune, Bakunin wrote that Paris opens a new era, “that of the definitive and complete emancipation of the popular masses and their future true solidarity, across and despite state boundaries...the next revolution of man, international in solidarity, will be the resurrection of Paris” - a revolution that the world still awaits.

The consistent anarchist, then, should be a socialist, but a socialist of a particular sort. He will not only oppose alienated and specialized labour and look forward to the appropriation of capital by the whole body of workers, but he will also insist that this appropriation be direct, not

intellectual interests have created real and powerful unity between the different parts of one nation, and between the different nations; that unity will outlive the State.

Federalism, however, is a two-edged weapon. During the French Revolution the “federalism” of the Girondins was reactionary, and the royalist school of Charles Maurras advocated it under the name of “regionalism.” In some countries, like the United States, the federal constitution is exploited by those who deprive men of colour of their civil rights. Bakunin thought that socialism alone could give federalism a revolutionary content. For this reason his Spanish followers showed little enthusiasm for the bourgeois federalist party of Pi y Margall, which called itself Proudhonist, and even for its “cantonalist” left wing during the brief, and abortive, episode of the republic of 1873.²⁰

Internationalism

The federalist idea leads logically to internationalism, that is to say, the organisation of nations on a federal basis into the “large, fraternal union of mankind.” Here again Bakunin showed up the bourgeois utopianism of a federal idea not based on international and revolutionary socialism. Far ahead of his time, he was a “European,” as people say today; he called for and desired a United States of Europe, the only way “of making a civil war between the different peoples in the European family impossible.” He was careful, however, to issue a warning against any European federation based on states “as they are at present constituted.”

“No centralised, bureaucratic, and hence military State, albeit called a republic, could enter seriously and sincerely into an international federation. By its very constitution, such a State will always be an overt or covert denial of internal liberty, and hence, necessarily, a permanent declaration of war, a menace to the existence of neighbouring countries.” Any alliance with a reactionary State would be a “Betrayal of the revolution.” The United States of Europe, first, and later, of the world, can only be set up after the overthrow of the old order which rests from top to bottom on violence and the principle of authority. On the other hand, if the social revolution takes place in any one country, any foreign country which has made a revolution on the same principles should be received into a revolutionary federation regardless of existing state frontiers.

“What really centralises a society of free men... is the contract. Social unity... is the product of the free union of citizens.... For a nation to manifest itself in unity, this unity must be centralised... in all its functions and faculties; centralisation must be created from the bottom up, from the periphery to the centre, and all functions must be independent and self-governing. The more numerous its foci, the stronger the centralisation will be.”

The federal system is the opposite of governmental centralisation. The two principles of libertarianism and authoritarianism which are in perpetual conflict are destined to come to terms: “Federation resolves all the problems which arise from the need to combine liberty and authority. The French Revolution provided the foundations for a new order, the secret of which lies with its heir, the working class. This is the new order: to unite all the people in a ‘federation of federations.’” This expression was not used carelessly: a universal federation would be too big; the large units must be federated between themselves. In his favourite prophetic style Proudhon declared: “The twentieth century will open the era of federations.”

Bakunin merely developed and strengthened the federalist ideas of Proudhon. Like Proudhon, he acclaimed the superiority of federal unity over authoritarian unity: “When the accursed power of the State is no longer there to constrain individuals, associations, communes, provinces, or regions to live together, they will be much more closely bound, will constitute a far more viable, real, and powerful whole than what they are at present forced into by the power of the State, equally oppressive to them all.” The authoritarians “are always confusing... formal, dogmatic, and governmental unity with a real and living unity which can only derive from the freest development of all individuals and groups, and from a federal and absolutely voluntary alliance... of the workers” associations in the communes and, beyond the communes, in the regions, beyond the regions, in the nations.”

Bakunin stressed the need for an intermediate body between the commune and the national federal organ: the province or region, a free federation of autonomous communes. It must not, however, be thought that federalism would lead to egoism or isolation. Solidarity is inseparable from freedom: “While the communes remain absolutely autonomous, they feel... solidarity among themselves and unite closely without losing any of their freedom.” In the modern world, moral, material, and

exercised by some elite force acting in the name of the proletariat. He will, in short, oppose

the organisation of production by the Government. It means State-socialism, the command of the State officials over production and the command of managers, scientists, shop-officials in the shop.... The goal of the working class is liberation from exploitation. This goal is not reached and cannot be reached by a new directing and governing class substituting itself for the bourgeoisie. It is only realized by the workers themselves being master over production.

These remarks are taken from “Five Theses on the Class Struggle” by the left-wing Marxist Anton Pannekoek, one of the outstanding left theorists of the council communist movement. And in fact, radical Marxism merges with anarchist currents.

As a further illustration, consider the following characterization of “revolutionary Socialism”:

The revolutionary Socialist denies that State ownership can end in anything other than a bureaucratic despotism. We have seen why the State cannot democratically control industry. Industry can only be democratically owned and controlled by the workers electing directly from their own ranks industrial administrative committees. Socialism will be fundamentally an industrial system; its constituencies will be of an industrial character. Thus, those carrying on the social activities and industries of society will be directly represented in the local and central councils of social administration. In this way the powers of such delegates will flow upwards from those carrying on the work and conversant with the needs of the community. When the central administrative industrial committee meets it will represent every phase of social activity. Hence the capitalist political or geographical state will be replaced by the industrial administrative committee of Socialism. The transition from the one social system to the other will be the social revolution. The political State throughout history has meant the government of men by ruling classes; the Republic of Socialism will be the government of industry administered on behalf of the whole community. The former meant the economic and political subjection of the many; the latter will mean the economic freedom of all - it will be, therefore, a true democracy.

This programmatic statement appears in William Paul's *The State, its Origins and Functions*, written in early 1917 - shortly before Lenin's *State and Revolution*, perhaps his most libertarian work (see note 9). Paul was a member of the Marxist-De Leonist Socialist Labour Party and later one of the founders of the British Communist Party.²⁵ His critique of state socialism resembles the libertarian doctrine of the anarchists in its principle that since state ownership and management will lead to bureaucratic despotism, the social revolution must replace it by the industrial organisation of society with direct workers' control. Many similar statements can be cited.

What is far more important is that these ideas have been realized in spontaneous revolutionary action, for example in Germany and Italy after World War I and in Spain (not only in the agricultural countryside, but also in industrial Barcelona) in 1936. One might argue that some form of council communism is the natural form of revolutionary socialism in an industrial society. It reflects the intuitive understanding that democracy is severely limited when the industrial system is controlled by any form of autocratic elite, whether of owners, managers and technocrats, a "vanguard" party, or a state bureaucracy. Under these conditions of authoritarian domination, the classical libertarian ideals developed further by Marx and Bakunin and all true revolutionaries cannot be realized; man will not be free to develop his own potentialities to their fullest, and the producer will remain "a fragment of a human being," degraded, a tool in the productive process directed from above.

The phrase "spontaneous revolutionary action" can be misleading. The anarcho-sindicalists, at least, took very seriously Bakunin's remark that the workers' organisations must create "not only the ideas but also the facts of the future itself" in the pre-revolutionary period. The accomplishments of the popular revolution in Spain, in particular, were based on the patient work of many years of organisation and education, one component of a long tradition of commitment and militancy. The resolutions of the Madrid Congress of June 1931 and the Saragossa Congress in May 1936 foreshadowed in many ways the acts of the revolution, as did the somewhat different ideas sketched by Santillan (see note 4) in his fairly specific account of the social and economic organisation to be instituted by the revolution. Guérin writes "The Spanish revolution was relatively mature in the minds of libertarian thinkers, as in the popular consciousness." And workers' organisations existed with the structure, the experience, and the understanding to undertake the task

As Proudhon's thought matured, the federalist idea was clarified and became predominant. One of his last writings bore the title *Du Principe Fédératif et de la Nécessité de Reconstituer de Parti de la Révolution* (1863) and, as previously mentioned, toward the end of his life he was more inclined to call himself a federalist than an anarchist. We no longer live in the age of small, ancient cities which, moreover, even in their time, sometimes came together on a federal basis. The problem of our time is that of administering large countries. Proudhon commented: "If the State were never to extend beyond the area of a city or commune I would leave everyone to make his own judgment, and say no more. But we must not forget that it is a matter of vast conglomerations of territory within which cities, towns, and villages can be counted by the thousand." No question of fragmenting society into microcosms. Unity is essential.

It was, however, the intention of the authoritarians to rule these local groups by the laws of "conquest," to which Proudhon retorted: "I declare to them that this is completely impossible, by virtue of the very law of unity."

"All these groups... are indestructible organisms... which can no more divest themselves of their sovereign independence than a member of the city can lose his citizenship or prerogatives as a free man.... All that would be achieved... would be the creation of an irreconcilable antagonism between the general sovereignty and each of the separate sovereignties, setting authority against authority; in other words, while supposedly developing unity one would be organising division."

In such a system of "unitary absorption" the cities or natural groups "would always be condemned to lose their identity in the superior agglomeration, which one might call artificial." Centralisation means "retaining in governmental relationship groups which are autonomous by their nature"; "... that is, for modern society, the true tyranny." It is a system of imperialism, communism, absolutism, thundered Proudhon, adding in one of those amalgamations of which he was a master: "All these words are synonyms."

On the other hand, unity, real unity, centralisation, real centralisation, would be indestructible if a bond of law, a contract of mutuality, a pact of federation was concluded between the various territorial units:

run under the direction of the local administrative body itself, nominated by the trade unions. Public services on a larger scale would be managed by a regional administration consisting of nominees of the federation of communes and supervised by a regional chamber of labour, while those on a national scale would come under the "Workers' State," that is, a State "based on a combination of free workers' communes." The anarchists were suspicious of this ambiguous organisation but de Paepe preferred to take this suspicion as a misunderstanding: was it not after all a verbal quarrel? If that was so he would be content to put the word "State" aside while keeping and even extending the actual thing "under the more pleasant disguise of some other term."

Most of the libertarians thought that the report from the Brussels Congress amounted to a restoration of the State: they saw the "Workers' State" turning inevitably into an "authoritarian State." If it was only a verbal quarrel they could not see why they should christen the new society without government by the very name used to describe the organisation which was to be abolished. At a subsequent congress at Berne, in 1876, Malatesta admitted that the public services required a unique, centralised form of organisation; but he refused to have them administered from above by a State. His adversaries seemed to him to confuse the State with society, that "living organic body." In the following year, 1877, at the Universal Socialist Congress in Ghent, Cesar de Paepe admitted that his precious Workers' State or People's State "might for a period be no more than a State of wage earners," but that "must be no more than a transitional phase imposed by circumstances," after which the nameless, urgent masses would not fail to take over the means of production and put them in the hands of the workers' associations. The anarchists were not appeased by this uncertain and distant perspective: what the State took over it would never give up.

Federalism

To sum up: the future libertarian society was to be endowed with a dual structure: economic, in the form of a federation of self-managing workers' associations; administrative, in the form of a federation of the communes. The final requirement was to crown and articulate this edifice with a concept of wider scope, which might be extended to apply to the whole world: federalism.

of social reconstruction when, with the Franco coup, the turmoil of early 1936 exploded into social revolution. In his introduction to a collection of documents on collectivization in Spain, the anarchist Augustin Souchy writes:

For many years, the anarchists and the syndicalists of Spain considered their supreme task to be the social transformation of the society. In their assemblies of Syndicates and groups, in their journals, their brochures and books, the problem of the social revolution was discussed incessantly and in a systematic fashion.²⁶

All of this lies behind the spontaneous achievements, the constructive work of the Spanish Revolution.

The ideas of libertarian socialism, in the sense described, have been submerged in the industrial societies of the past half-century. The dominant ideologies have been those of state socialism or state capitalism (of increasingly militarized character in the United States, for reasons that are not obscure).²⁷ But there has been a rekindling of interest in the past few years. The theses I quoted by Anton Pannekoek were taken from a recent pamphlet of a radical French workers' group (*Informations Correspondance Ouvrière*). The remarks by William Paul on revolutionary socialism are cited in a paper by Walter Kendall given at the National Conference on Workers' Control in Sheffield, England, in March 1969. The workers' control movement has become a significant force in England in the past few years. It has organised several conferences and has produced a substantial pamphlet literature, and counts among its active adherents representatives of some of the most important trade unions. The Amalgamated Engineering and Foundry workers' Union, for example, has adopted, as official policy, the program of nationalization of basic industries under "workers' control at all levels."²⁸ On the Continent, there are similar developments. May 1968 of course accelerated the growing interest in council communism and related ideas in France and Germany, as it did in England.

Given the highly conservative cast of our highly ideological society, it is not too surprising that the United States has been relatively untouched by these developments. But that too may change. The erosion of cold-war mythology at least makes it possible to raise these questions in fairly broad circles. If the present wave of repression can be beaten back, if the left can overcome its more suicidal tendencies and build upon what

has been accomplished in the past decade, then the problem of how to organise industrial society on truly democratic lines, with democratic control in the workplace and in the community, should become a dominant intellectual issue for those who are alive to the problems of contemporary society, and, as a mass movement for libertarian socialism develops, speculation should proceed to action.

In his manifesto of 1865, Bakunin predicted that one element in the social revolution will be “that intelligent and truly noble part of youth which, though belonging by birth to the privileged classes, in its generous convictions and ardent aspirations, adopts the cause of the people.” Perhaps in the rise of the student movement of the 1960s one sees steps towards a fulfilment of this prophecy.

Daniel Guérin has undertaken what he has described as a “process of rehabilitation” of anarchism. He argues, convincingly I believe, that “the constructive ideas of anarchism retain their vitality, that they may, when re-examined and sifted, assist contemporary socialist thought to undertake a new departure... [and] contribute to enriching Marxism.”²⁹

From the “broad back” of anarchism he has selected for more intensive scrutiny those ideas and actions that can be described as libertarian socialist. This is natural and proper. This framework accommodates the major anarchist spokesmen as well as the mass actions that have been animated by anarchist sentiments and ideals. Guérin is concerned not only with anarchist thought but also with the spontaneous actions of popular revolutionary struggle. He is concerned with social as well as intellectual creativity. Furthermore, he attempts to draw from the constructive achievements of the past lessons that will enrich the theory of social liberation. For those who wish not only to understand the world, but also to change it, this is the proper way to study the history of anarchism.

Guérin describes the anarchism of the nineteenth century as essentially doctrinal, while the twentieth century, for the anarchists, has been a time of “revolutionary practice.”³⁰ *Anarchism* reflects that judgment. His interpretation of anarchism consciously points toward the future. Arthur Rosenberg once pointed out that popular revolutions characteristically seek to replace “a feudal or centralized authority ruling by force” with some form of communal system which “implies the destruction and disappearance of the old form of State.” Such a system will be either socialist or an “extreme form of democracy... [which is] the preliminary

been socialised it would be developed by *communes solidarisées*. In his speech Bakunin dotted the i's:

“I am voting for collectivization of social wealth, and in particular of the land, in the sense of social liquidation. By social liquidation I mean the expropriation of all who are now proprietors, by the abolition of the juridical and political State which is the sanction and sole guarantor of property as it now is. As to subsequent forms of organisation... I favour the solidarisation of communes... with all the greater satisfaction because such solidarisation entails the organisation of society from the bottom up.”

How should the Public Services be Managed?

The compromise which had been worked out was a long way from eliminating ambiguity, the more so since at the very same Basel Congress the authoritarian socialists had not felt shy about applauding the management of the economy by the State. The problem subsequently proved especially thorny when discussion turned to the management of large-scale public services like railways, postal services, etc. By the Hague Congress of 1872, the followers of Marx and those of Bakunin had parted company. Thus, the debate on public services arose in the misnamed “anti-authoritarian” International which had survived the split. This question created fresh discord between the anarchists and those more or less “statist” socialists who had chosen to detach themselves from Marx and remain with the anarchists in the International.

Since such public services are national in scale, it is obvious that they cannot be managed by the workers’ associations alone, nor by the communes alone. Proudhon tried to solve the problem by “balancing” workers’ management by some form of “public initiative,” which he did not explain fully. Who was to administer the public services? The federation of the communes, answered the libertarians; the State, the authoritarians were tempted to reply.

At the Brussels Congress of the International in 1874, the Belgian socialist Cesar de Paepe tried to bring about a compromise between the two conflicting views. Local public services would go to the communes to be

For authoritarian or libertarian socialists, the ideal to be pursued must surely be this direct democracy which, if pressed to the limits in both economic self-management and territorial administration, would destroy the last vestiges of any kind of authority. It is certain, however, that the necessary condition for its operation is a stage of social evolution in which all workers would possess learning and skills as well as consciousness, while at the same time abundance would have taken the place of shortage. In 1880, long before Lenin, the district of Courtelary proclaimed: "The more or less democratic practice of universal suffrage will become decreasingly important in a scientifically organised society." But not before its advent.

The Disputed Term "State"

The reader knows by now that the anarchists refused to use the term "State" even for a transitional situation. The gap between authoritarians and libertarians has not always been very wide on this score. In the First International the collectivists, whose spokesman was Bakunin, allowed the terms "regenerate State," "new and revolutionary State," or even "socialist State" to be accepted as synonyms for "social collective." The anarchists soon saw, however, that it was rather dangerous for them to use the same word as the authoritarians while giving it a quite different meaning.

They felt that a new concept called for a new word and that the use of the old term could be dangerously ambiguous; so they ceased to give the name "State" to the social collective of the future.

The Marxists, for their part, were anxious to obtain the co-operation of the anarchists to make the principle of collective ownership triumph in the International over the last remnant of neo-Proudhonian individualism. So they were willing to make verbal concessions and agreed half-heartedly to the anarchists' proposal to substitute for the word "State" either *fédération* or *solidarisation* of communes. In the same spirit, Engels attacked his friend and compatriot August Bebel about the Gotha Programme of the German social democrats, and thought it wise to suggest that he "suppress the term 'State' throughout, using instead *Gemeinwesen*, a good old German word meaning the same as the French word 'Commune.'" At the Basel Congress of 1869, the collectivist anarchists and the Marxists had united to decide that once property had

condition for Socialism inasmuch as Socialism can only be realized in a world enjoying the highest possible measure of individual freedom." This ideal, he notes, was common to Marx and the anarchists.³¹ This natural struggle for liberation runs counter to the prevailing tendency towards centralization in economic and political life.

A century ago Marx wrote that the workers of Paris "felt there was but one alternative - the Commune, or the empire - under whatever name it might reappear."

*The empire had ruined them economically by the havoc it made of public wealth, by the wholesale financial swindling it fostered, by the props it lent to the artificially accelerated centralization of capital, and the concomitant expropriation of their own ranks. It had suppressed them politically, it had shocked them morally by its orgies, it had insulted their Voltairianism by handing over the education of their children to the frères Ignorantins, it had revolted their national feeling as Frenchmen by precipitating them headlong into a war which left only one equivalent for the ruins it made - the disappearance of the empire.*³²

The miserable Second Empire "was the only form of government possible at a time when the bourgeoisie had already lost, and the working class had not yet acquired, the faculty of ruling the nation."

It is not very difficult to rephrase these remarks so that they become appropriate to the imperial systems of 1970. The problem of "freeing man from the curse of economic exploitation and political and social enslavement" remains the problem of our time. As long as this is so, the doctrines and the revolutionary practice of libertarian socialism will serve as an inspiration and guide.

Preface

There has recently been a renewal of interest in anarchism. Books, pamphlets, and anthologies are being devoted to it. It is doubtful whether this literary effort is really very effective. It is difficult to trace the outlines of anarchism. Its master thinkers rarely condensed their ideas into systematic works. If, on occasion, they tried to do so, it was only in thin pamphlets designed for propaganda and popularization in which only fragments of their ideas can be observed. Moreover, there are several kinds of anarchism and many variations within the thought of each of the great libertarians.

Rejection of authority and stress on the priority of individual judgment make it natural for libertarians to “profess the faith of anti-dogmatism.” “Let us not become the leaders of a new religion,” Proudhon wrote to Marx, “even were it to be the religion of logic and reason.” It follows that the views of the libertarians are more varied, more fluid, and harder to apprehend than those of the authoritarian socialists ¹ whose rival churches at least try to impose a set of beliefs on their faithful.

Just before he was sent to the guillotine, the terrorist Emile Henry wrote a letter to the governor of the prison where he was awaiting execution explaining: “Beware of believing anarchy to be a dogma, a doctrine above question or debate, to be venerated by its adepts as is the Koran by devout Moslems. No! the absolute freedom which we demand constantly develops our thinking and raises it toward new horizons (according to the turn of mind of various individuals), takes it out of the narrow framework of regulation and codification. We are not ‘believers!’” The condemned man went on to reject the “blind faith” of the French Marxists of his period: “They believe something because Guesde ² has said one must believe it, they have a catechism and it would be sacrilege to question any of its clauses.”

the first stage of social reorganisation it is the commune which will give the essential minimum to each “dispossessed” person as compensation for the goods confiscated. He described its internal organisation with some precision. It will be administered by a council of elected delegates with express positive mandates; these will always be responsible to the electorate and subject to recall. The council of the commune may elect from among its number executive committees for each branch of the revolutionary administration of the commune. Dividing responsibility among so many has the advantage of involving the greatest number of the rank and file in management. It curtails the disadvantages of a system of representation in which a small number of elected delegates could take over all the duties, while the people remained almost passive in rarely convoked general assemblies. Bakunin instinctively grasped that elected councils must be “working bodies,” with both regulatory and executive duties — what Lenin was later to call “democracy without parliamentarianism” in one of his libertarian moods. Again, the Courtelary district made this idea more explicit:

“In order to avoid falling back into the errors of centralised and bureaucratic administration, we think that the general interests of the commune should be administered by different special commissions for each branch of activity and not by a single local administrative body.... This arrangement would prevent administration from taking on the character of government.”

The followers of Bakunin showed no such balanced judgment of the necessary stages of historical development. In the 1880's they took the collectivist anarchists to task. In a critique of the precedent set by the Paris Commune of 1871, Kropotkin scolded the people for having “once more made use of the representative system within the Commune,” for having “abdicated their own initiative in favour of an assembly of people elected more or less by chance,” and he lamented that some reformers “always try to preserve this government by proxy at any price.” He held that the representative system had had its day. It was the organised domination of the bourgeoisie and must disappear with it. “For the new economic era which is coming, we must seek a new form of political organisation based on a principle quite different from representation.” Society must kind forms of political relations closer to the people than representative government, “nearer to self-government, to government of oneself by oneself.”

precision: it is essentially a “sovereign being” and, as such, “has the right to govern and administer itself, to impose taxes, to dispose of its property and revenue, to set up schools for its youth and appoint teachers,” etc. “That is what a commune is, for that is what collective political life is.... It denies all restrictions, is self-limiting; all external coercion is alien to it and a menace to its survival.” It has been shown that Proudhon thought self-management incompatible with an authoritarian State; similarly, the commune could not coexist with authority centralised from above:

“There is no halfway house. The commune will be sovereign or subject, all or nothing. Cast it in the best role you can; as soon as it is no longer subject to its own law, recognizes a higher authority, [and] the larger grouping... of which it is a member is declared to be superior..., it is inevitable that they will at some time disagree and come into conflict. As soon as there is a conflict the logic of power insures victory for the central authority, and this without discussion, negotiation, or trial, debate between authority and subordinate being impermissible, scandalous, and absurd.”

Bakunin slotted the commune into the social organisation of the future more logically than Proudhon. The associations of productive workers were to be freely allied within the communes and the communes, in their turn, freely federated among themselves. “Spontaneous life and action have been held in abeyance for centuries by the all-absorbing and monopolistic power of the State; its abdication will return them to the communes.”

How would trade unionism relate to the communes? In 1880 the Courtelary district of the Jura Federation ¹⁹ was sure of its answer: “The organ of this local life will be a federation of trades, and this local federation will become the commune.” However, those drafting the report, not fully decided on this point, raised the question: “Is it to be a general assembly of all the inhabitants, or delegations from the trades... which will draw up the constitution of the commune?” The conclusion was that there were two possible systems to be considered. Should the trade union or the commune have priority? Later, especially in Russia and Spain, this question divided the “anarcho-communists” from the “anarcho-syndicalists.”

Bakunin saw the commune as the ideal vehicle for the expropriation of the instruments of production for the benefit of self-management. In

In spite of the variety and richness of anarchist thinking, in spite of contradictions and doctrinal disputes which were often centred on false problems, anarchism presents a fairly homogeneous body of ideas. At first sight it is true that there may seem to be a vast difference between the individualist anarchism of Stirner (1806–1856) and social anarchism. When one looks more deeply into the matter, however, the partisans of total freedom and those of social organisation do not appear as far apart as they may have thought themselves, or as others might at first glance suppose. The anarchist *sociétaire* ³ is also an individualist and the individualist anarchist may well be a partisan of the *sociétaire* approach who fears to declare himself.

The relative unity of social anarchism arises from the fact that it was developed during a single period by two masters, one of whom was the disciple and follower of the other: the Frenchman Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809–1865) and the Russian exile Mikhail Bakunin (1814–1876). The latter defined anarchism as “Proudhonism greatly developed and pushed to its furthest conclusion.” This type of anarchism called itself collectivist.

Its successors, however, rejected the term and proclaimed themselves to be communists (“libertarian communists,” of course). One of them, another Russian exile, Peter Kropotkin (1842–1921), bent the doctrine in a more rigidly utopian and optimistic direction but his “scientific” approach failed to conceal its weaknesses. The Italian Errico Malatesta (1853–1932), on the other hand, turned to audacious and sometimes puerile activism although he enriched anarchist thinking with his intransigent and often lucid polemics. Later the experience of the Russian Revolution produced one of the most remarkable anarchist works, that of Voline (1882–1945).⁴

The anarchist terrorism of the end of the nineteenth century had dramatic and anecdotal features and an aura of blood which appeal to the taste of the general public. In its time it was a school for individual energy and courage, which command respect, and it had the merit of drawing social injustice to public attention; but today it seems to have been a temporary and sterile deviation in the history of anarchism. It seems out-of-date. To fix one’s attention on the “stewpot” of Ravachol ⁵ is to ignore or underestimate the fundamental characteristics of a definite concept of social reorganisation. When this concept is properly studied it appears highly constructive and not destructive, as its opponents pretend. It is this constructive aspect of anarchism that will be presented to the reader in this study. By what right and upon what basis? Because the material

studied is not antiquated but relevant to life, and because it poses problems which are more acute than ever. It appears that libertarian thinkers anticipated the needs of our time to a considerable extent.

This small book does not seek to duplicate the histories and bibliographies of anarchism already published. Their authors were scholars, mainly concerned with omitting no names and, fascinated by superficial similarities, they discovered numerous forerunners of anarchism. They gave almost equal weight to the genius and to his most minor follower, and presented an excess of biographical details rather than making a profound study of ideas. Their learned tomes leave the reader with a feeling of diffusion, almost incoherence, still asking himself what anarchism really is. I have tried a somewhat different approach. I assume that the lives of the masters of libertarian thought are known. In any case they are often much less illuminating for our purpose than some writers imagine. Many of these masters were not anarchists throughout their lives and their complete works include passages which have nothing to do with anarchism.

To take an example: in the second part of his career Proudhon's thinking took a conservative turn. His verbose and monumental *De la Justice dans la Révolution et dans l'Eglise* (1858) was mainly concerned with the problem of religion and its conclusion was far from libertarian. In the end, in spite of passionate anti-clericalism, he accepted all the categories of Catholicism, subject to his own interpretations, proclaimed that the instruction and moral training of the people would benefit from the preservation of Christian symbolism, and in his final words seemed almost ready to say a prayer. Respect for his memory inhibits all but a passing reference to his "salute to war," his diatribes against women, or his fits of racism.

The opposite happened to Bakunin. His wild early career as a revolutionary conspirator was unconnected with anarchism. He embraced libertarian ideas only in 1864 after the failure of the Polish insurrection in which he played a part. His earlier writings have no place in an anarchist anthology. As for Kropotkin, his purely scientific work, for which he is today celebrated in the U.S.S.R. as a shining light in the study of national geography, has no more connection with anarchism than had his prowar attitude during the First World War.

In place of a historical and chronological sequence an unusual method has been adopted in this book: the reader will be presented in turn with

prime issue, owing to the influence of the anarchists: after the abolition of the wage system, trade unions would become the embryo of the administration of the future; government would be replaced by councils of workers' organisations.

In 1876 James Guillaume, a disciple of Bakunin, wrote his *Idées sur l'Organisation Sociale*, in which he made self-management incorporate trade unionism. He advocated the creation of corporate federations of workers, in particular trades which would be united "not, as before, to protect their wages against the greed of the employers, but... to provide mutual guarantees for access to the tools of their trade, which would become the collective property of the whole corporate federation as the result of reciprocal contracts." Bakunin's view was that these federations would act as planning agencies, thus filling one of the gaps in Proudhon's plan for self-management. One thing had been lacking in his proposals: the link which would unite the various producers' associations and prevent them from running their affairs egotistically, in a parochial spirit, without care for the general good or the other workers' associations. Trade unionism was to fill the gap and articulate self-management. It was presented as the agent of planning and unity among producers.

The Communes

During his early career Proudhon was entirely concerned with economic organisation. His suspicion of anything political led him to neglect the problem of territorial administration. It was enough for him to say that the workers must take the place of the State without saying precisely how this would come about. In the latter years of his life he paid more attention to the political problem, which he approached from the bottom up in true anarchist style. On a local basis men were to combine among themselves into what he called a "natural group" which "constitutes itself into a city or political unit, asserting itself in unity, independence, and autonomy." "Similar groups, some distance apart, may have interests in common; it is conceivable that they may associate together and form a higher group for mutual security." At this point the anarchist thinker saw the spectre of the hated State: never, never should the local groups "as they unite to safeguard their interests and develop their wealth... go so far as to abdicate in a sort of self-immolation at the feet of the new Moloch." Proudhon defined the autonomous commune with some

independent countries — or whether, on the other hand, production as a whole would be socialised and made subject to self-management.

Bakunin was a consistent collectivist and clearly saw the dangers of the coexistence of the two sectors. Even in association the workers cannot accumulate the necessary capital to stand up to large-scale bourgeois capital. There would also be a danger that the capitalist environment would contaminate the workers' associations so that "a new class of exploiters of the labour of the proletariat" would arise within them. Self-management contains the seeds of the full economic emancipation of the working masses, but these seeds can only germinate and grow when "capital itself, industrial establishments, raw materials, and capital equipment... become the collective property of workers' associations for both agricultural and industrial production, and these are freely organised and federated among themselves." "Radical, conclusive social change will only be brought about by means affecting the whole society," that is, by a social revolution which transforms private property into collective property. In such a social organisation the workers would be their own collective capitalists, their own employers. Only "those things which are truly for personal use" would remain private property.

Bakunin admitted that producers' co-operatives served to accustom the workers to organising themselves, and managing their own affairs, and were the first steps in collective working-class action, but he held that until the social revolution had been achieved such islands in the midst of the capitalist system would have only a limited effect, and he urged the workers "to think more of strikes than of co-operatives."

Trade Unions

Bakunin also valued the part played by trade unions, "the natural organisations of the masses," "the only really effective weapon" the workers could use against the bourgeoisie. He thought the trade-union movement could contribute more than the ideologists to organising the forces of the proletariat independently of bourgeois radicalism. He saw the future as the national and international organisation of the workers by trade.

Trade unionism was not specially mentioned at the first congresses of the International. From the Basel Congress in 1869 onward, it became a

the main constructive themes of anarchism, and not with personalities. I have intentionally omitted only elements which are not specifically libertarian, such as the critique of capitalism, atheism, anti-militarism, free love, etc. Rather than give second-hand and therefore faded paraphrases unsupported by evidence, I have allowed quotations to speak directly as far as possible. This gives the reader access to the ideas of the masters in their warm and living form, as they were originally penned.

Secondly, the doctrine is examined from a different angle: it is shown in the great periods when it was put to the test by events — the Russian Revolution of 1917, Italy after 1918, the Spanish Revolution of 1936. The final chapter treats what is undoubtedly the most original creation of anarchism: workers' self-management as it has been developed in the grip of contemporary reality, in Yugoslavia and Algeria — and soon, perhaps, who knows, in the U.S.S.R.

Throughout this little book the reader will see two conceptions of socialism contrasted and sometimes related to one another, one authoritarian, the other libertarian. By the end of the analysis it is hoped that the reader will be led to ask himself which is the conception of the future.

1. The Basic Ideas of Anarchism

A Matter of Words

The word *anarchy* is as old as the world. It is derived from two ancient Greek words, *av* (an), *apxn* (arkhê), and means something like the absence of authority or government. However, for millennia the presumption has been accepted that man cannot dispense with one or the other, and anarchy has been understood in a pejorative sense, as a synonym for disorder, chaos, and disorganisation.

Pierre-Joseph Proudhon was famous for his quips (such as “property is theft”) and took to himself the word anarchy. As if his purpose were to shock as much as possible, in 1840 he engaged in the following dialogue with the “Philistine.”

“You are a republican.”

“Republican, yes; but that means nothing. *Res publica* is ‘the State.’ Kings, too, are republicans.”

“Ah well! You are a democrat?”

“No.”

“What! Perhaps you are a monarchist?”

“No.”

“Constitutionalist then?”

“God forbid.”

“Then you are an aristocrat?”

“Not at all!”

Centralisation and Planning

At all events, Proudhon was aware that management by workers’ associations would have to cover large units. He stressed the “need for centralisation and large units” and asked: “Do not workers’ associations for the operation of heavy industry mean large units?” “We put economic centralisation in the place of political centralisation.” However, his fear of authoritarian planning made him instinctively prefer competition inspired by solidarity. Since then, anarchist thinkers have become advocates of a libertarian and democratic form of planning, worked out from the bottom up by the federation of self-managing enterprises.

Bakunin foresaw that self-management would open perspectives for planning on a world-wide scale:

“Workers’ co-operative associations are a new historical phenomenon; today as we witness their birth we cannot foresee their future, but only guess at the immense development which surely awaits them and the new political and social conditions they will generate. It is not only possible but probable that they will, in time, outgrow the limits of today’s counties, provinces, and even states to transform the whole structure of human society, which will no longer be divided into nations but into industrial units.”

These would then “form a vast economic federation” with a supreme assembly at its head. With the help of “world-wide statistics, giving data as comprehensive as they are detailed and precise,” it would balance supply and demand, direct, distribute, and share out world industrial production among the different countries so that crises in trade and employment, enforced stagnation, economic disaster, and loss of capital would almost certainly entirely disappear.

Complete Socialisation?

There was an ambiguity in Proudhon’s idea of management by the workers’ associations. It was not always clear whether the self-management groups would continue to compete with capitalist undertakings — in other words, whether a socialist sector would coexist with a private sector, as is said to be the present situation in Algeria and other newly

In Proudhon's view, however, the absence of competition would be no less pernicious. Taking the tobacco administration,¹⁸ he found that its products were too dear and its supplies inadequate simply because it had long been a monopoly free from competition. If all industries were subject to such a system, the nation would never be able to balance its income and expenditures. The competition Proudhon dreamed of was not to be the laissez-faire competition of the capitalist economic system, but competition endowed with a higher principle to "socialise" it, competition which would function on the basis of fair exchange, in a spirit of solidarity, competition which would both protect individual initiative and bring back to society the wealth which is at present diverted from it by capitalist appropriation.

It is obvious that there was something utopian in this idea. Competition and the so-called market economy inevitably produce inequality and exploitation, and would do so even if one started from complete equality. They could not be combined with workers' self-management unless it were on a temporary basis, as a necessary evil, until (1) a psychology of "honest exchange" had developed among the workers; (2) most important, society as a whole had passed from conditions of shortage to the stage of abundance, when competition would lose its purpose.

Even in such a transitional period, however, it seems desirable that competition should be limited, as in Yugoslavia today, to the consumer-goods sector where it has at least the one advantage of protecting the interests of the consumer.

The libertarian communist would condemn Proudhon's version of a collective economy as being based on a principle of conflict; competitors would be in a position of equality at the start, only to be hurled into a struggle which would inevitably produce victors and vanquished, and where goods would end up by being exchanged according to the principles of supply and demand; "which would be to fall right back into competition and the bourgeois world." Some critics of the Yugoslav experiment from other communist countries use much the same terms to attack it. They feel that self-management in any form merits the same hostility they harbor toward a competitive market economy, as if the two ideas were basically and permanently inseparable.

"You want a mixed form of government?"

"Even less."

"Then what are you?"

"An anarchist."

He sometimes made the concession of spelling anarchy "an-archy" to put the packs of adversaries off the scent. By this term he understood anything but disorder. Appearances notwithstanding, he was more constructive than destructive, as we shall see. He held government responsible for disorder and believed that only a society without government could restore the natural order and re-create social harmony. He argued that the language could furnish no other term and chose to restore to the old word anarchy its strict etymological meaning. In the heat of his polemics, however, he obstinately and paradoxically also used the word anarchy in its pejorative sense of disorder, thus making confusion worse confounded. His disciple Mikhail Bakunin followed him in this respect.

Proudhon and Bakunin carried this even further, taking malicious pleasure in playing with the confusion created by the use of the two opposite meanings of the word: for them, anarchy was both the most colossal disorder, the most complete disorganisation of society and, beyond this gigantic revolutionary change, the construction of a new, stable, and rational order based on freedom and solidarity.

The immediate followers of the two fathers of anarchy hesitated to use a word so deplorably elastic, conveying only a negative idea to the uninitiated, and lending itself to ambiguities which could be annoying to say the least. Even Proudhon became more cautious toward the end of his brief career and was happy to call himself a "federalist." His petty-bourgeois descendants preferred the term *mutuellisme* to *anarchisme* and the socialist line adopted *collectivisme*, soon to be displaced by *communisme*. At the end of the century in France, Sebastien Faure took up a word originated in 1858 by one Joseph Dejacque to make it the title of a journal, *Le Libertaine*. Today the terms "anarchist" and "libertarian" have become interchangeable.

Most of these terms have a major disadvantage: they fail to express the basic characteristics of the doctrines they are supposed to describe. Anarchism is really a synonym for socialism. The anarchist is primarily a socialist whose aim is to abolish the exploitation of man by man.

Anarchism is only one of the streams of socialist thought, that stream whose main components are concern for liberty and haste to abolish the State. Adolph Fischer, one of the Chicago martyrs, ⁶ claimed that “every anarchist is a socialist, but every socialist is not necessarily an anarchist.”

Some anarchists consider themselves to be the best and most logical socialists, but they have adopted a label also attached to the terrorists, or have allowed others to hang it around their necks. This has often caused them to be mistaken for a sort of “foreign body” in the socialist family and has led to a long string of misunderstandings and verbal battles — usually quite purposeless. Some contemporary anarchists have tried to clear up the misunderstanding by adopting a more explicit term: they align themselves with libertarian socialism or communism.

A Visceral Revolt

Anarchism can be described first and foremost as a visceral revolt. The anarchist is above all a man in revolt. He rejects society as a whole along with its guardians. Max Stirner declared that the anarchist frees himself of all that is sacred, and carries out a vast operation of deconsecration. These “vagabonds of the intellect,” these “bad characters,” “refuse to treat as intangible truths things that give respite and consolation to thousands and instead leap over the barriers of tradition to indulge without restraint the fantasies of their impudent critique.” ⁷

Proudhon rejected all and any “official persons” — philosophers, priests, magistrates, academicians, journalists, parliamentarians, etc. — for whom “the people is always a monster to be fought, muzzled, and chained down; which must be led by trickery like the elephant or the rhinoceros; or cowed by famine; and which is bled by colonization and war.” Élisée Reclus ⁸ explained why society seems, to these well-heeled gentlemen, worth preserving: “Since there are rich and poor, rulers and subjects, masters and servants, Caesars who give orders for combat and gladiators who go and die, the prudent need only place themselves on the side of the rich and the masters, and make themselves into courtiers to the emperors.”

His permanent state of revolt makes the anarchist sympathetic to non-conformists and outlaws, and leads him to embrace the cause of the convict and the outcast. Bakunin thought that Marx and Engels spoke

Competition

Competition is one of the norms inherited from the bourgeois economy which raises thorny problems when preserved in a collectivist or self-management economy. Proudhon saw it as an “expression of social spontaneity” and the guarantee of the “freedom” of the association. Moreover, it would for a long time to come provide an “irreplaceable stimulus” without which an “immense slackening off” would follow the high tension of industry. He went into detail:

“The working brotherhood is pledged to supply society with the goods and services asked from it at prices as near as possible to the cost of production.... Thus the workers’ association denies itself any amalgamation [of a monopolistic type], subjects itself to the law of competition, and keeps its books and records open to society, which reserves the power to dissolve the association as the ultimate sanction of society’s right of supervision.” “Competition and association are interdependent.... The most deplorable error of socialism is to have considered it [competition] as the disorder of society. There can... be... no question of destroying competition.... It is a matter of finding an equilibrium, one could say a policing agent.”

Proudhon’s attachment to the principle of competition drew the sarcasm of Louis Blanc: “We cannot understand those who have advocated the strange linking of two contrary principles. To graft brotherhood onto competition is a wretched idea: it is like replacing eunuchs by hermaphrodites.” The pre-Marxian Louis Blanc wanted to “reach a uniform price” determined by the State, and prevent all competition between establishments within an industry. Proudhon retorted that prices “can only be fixed by competition, that is, by the power of the consumer... to dispense with the services of those who overcharge....” “Remove competition... and you deprive society of its motive force, so that it runs down like a clock with a broken spring.”

Proudhon, however, did not hide from himself the evils of competition, which he described very fully in his treatise on political economy. He knew it to be a source of inequality and admitted that “in competition, victory goes to the big battalions.” It is so “anarchic” (in the pejorative sense of the term) that it operates always to the benefit of private interests, necessarily engenders civil strife and, in the long run, creates oligarchies. “Competition kills competition.”

a projected anarchist international, admitted that communism could be brought about immediately only in a very limited number of areas and, “for the rest,” collectivism would have to be accepted “for a transitional period.”

For communism to be possible, a high stage of moral development is required of the members of society, a sense of solidarity both elevated and profound, which the upsurge of the revolution may not suffice to induce. This doubt is the more justified in that material conditions favourable to this development will not exist at the beginning.

Anarchism was about to face the test of experience, on the eve of the Spanish Revolution of 1936, when Diego Abad de Santillan demonstrated the immediate impracticability of libertarian communism in very similar terms. He held that the capitalist system had not prepared human beings for communism: far from developing their social instincts and sense of solidarity it tends in every way to suppress and penalize such feelings.

Santillan recalled the experience of the Russian and other revolutions to persuade the anarchists to be more realistic. He charged them with receiving the most recent lessons of experience with suspicion or superiority. He maintained that it is doubtful whether a revolution would lead directly to the realization of our ideal of communist anarchism. The collectivist watchword, “to each the product of his labour,” would be more appropriate than communism to the requirements of the real situation in the first phase of a revolution’ when the economy would be disorganised, production at a low ebb, and food supplies a priority. The economic models to be tried would, at best, evolve slowly toward communism. To put human beings brutally behind bars by imprisoning them in rigid forms of social life would be an authoritarian approach which would hinder the revolution. *Mutuellisme*, communism, collectivism are only different means to the same end. Santillan turned back to the wise empiricism of Proudhon and Bakunin, claiming for the coming Spanish Revolution the right to experiment freely: “The degree of *mutuellisme*, collectivism, or communism which can be achieved will be determined freely in each locality and each social sphere.” In fact, as will be seen later, the experience of the Spanish “collectives” of 1936 illustrated the difficulties arising from the premature implementation of integral communism.¹⁷

most unfairly of the lumpen-proletariat, of the “proletariat in rags”: “For the spirit and force of the future social revolution is with it and it alone, and not with the stratum of the working class which has become like the bourgeoisie.”

Explosive statements which an anarchist would not disavow were voiced by Balzac through the character of Vautrin, a powerful incarnation of social protest — half rebel, half criminal.

Horror of the State

The anarchist regards the State as the most deadly of the preconceptions which have blinded men through the ages. Stirner denounced him who “throughout eternity... is obsessed by the State.”

Proudhon was especially fierce against “this fantasy of our minds that the first duty of a free and rational being is to refer to museums and libraries,” and he laid bare the mechanism whereby “this mental predisposition has been maintained and its fascination made to seem invincible: government has always presented itself to men’s minds as the natural organ of justice and the protector of the weak.” He mocked the inveterate authoritarians who “bow before power like church wardens before the sacrament” and reproached “all parties without exception” for turning their gaze “unceasingly toward authority as if to the polestar.” He longed for the day when “renunciation of authority shall have replaced faith in authority and the political catechism.”

Kropotkin jeered at the bourgeois who “regarded the people as a horde of savages who would be useless as soon as government ceased to function.” Malatesta anticipated psychoanalysis when he uncovered the fear of freedom in the subconscious of authoritarians.

What is wrong with the State in the eyes of the anarchists?

Stirner expressed it thus: “We two are enemies, the State and I.” “Every State is a tyranny, be it the tyranny of a single man or a group.” Every State is necessarily what we now call totalitarian: “The State has always one purpose: to limit, control, subordinate the individual and subject him to the general purpose.... Through its censorship, its supervision, and its police the State tries to obstruct all free activity and sees this repression as its duty, because the instinct of self-preservation demands it.” “The

State does not permit me to use my thoughts to their full value and communicate them to other men... unless they are its own.... Otherwise it shuts me up."

Proudhon wrote in the same vein: "The government of man by man is servitude." "Whoever lays a hand on me to govern me is a usurper and a tyrant. I declare him to be my enemy." He launched into a tirade worthy of a Moliere or a Beaumarchais:

"To be governed is to be watched over, inspected, spied on, directed, legislated, regimented, closed in, indoctrinated, preached at, controlled, assessed, evaluated, censored, commanded; all by creatures that have neither the right, nor wisdom, nor virtue.... To be governed means that at every move, operation, or transaction one is noted, registered, entered in a census, taxed, stamped, priced, assessed, patented, licensed, authorized, recommended, admonished, prevented, reformed, set right, corrected. Government means to be subjected to tribute, trained, ransomed, exploited, monopolized, extorted, pressured, mystified, robbed; all in the name of public utility and the general good. Then, at the first sign of resistance or word of complaint, one is repressed, fined, despised, vexed, pursued, hustled, beaten up, garrotted, imprisoned, shot, machine-gunned, judged, sentenced, deported, sacrificed, sold, betrayed, and to cap it all, ridiculed, mocked, outraged, and dishonoured. That is government, that is its justice and its morality!... O human personality! How can it be that you have cowered in such subjection for sixty centuries?"

Bakunin sees the State as an "abstraction devouring the life of the people," an "immense cemetery where all the real aspirations and living forces of a country generously and blissfully allow themselves to be buried in the name of that abstraction."

According to Malatesta, "far from creating energy, government by its methods wastes, paralyzes, and destroys enormous potential." As the powers of the State and its bureaucracy widen, the danger grows more acute. Proudhon foresaw the greatest evil of the twentieth century: "Fonctionnairisme [legalistic rule by civil servants]... leads toward state communism, the absorption of all local and individual life into the administrative machinery, and the destruction of all free thought. Everyone wants to take refuge under the wing of power, to live in

and cannot bring about a profound revolutionary change in man. It is incompatible with anarchism; a new form of ownership requires a new form of remuneration. Service to the community cannot be measured in units of money. Needs will have to be given precedence over services, and all the products of the labour of all must belong to all, each to take his share of them freely. *To each according to his need* should be the motto of libertarian communism.

Kropotkin, Malatesta, and their followers seem to have overlooked the fact that Proudhon had anticipated their objections and revised his earlier ideas. In his *Théorie de la Propriété*, published after his death, he explained that he had only supported the idea of equal pay for equal work in his "First Memorandum on Property" of 1840: "I had forgotten to say two things: first, that labour is measured by combining its duration with its intensity; second, that one must not include in the worker's wages the amortization of the cost of his education and the work he did on his own account as an unpaid apprentice, nor the premiums to insure him against the risks he runs, all of which vary in different occupations." Proudhon claimed to have "repaired" this "omission" in his later writings in which he proposed that mutual insurance co-operative associations should compensate for unequal costs and risks. Furthermore, Proudhon did not regard the remuneration of the members of a workers' association as "wages" but as a share of profits freely determined by associated and equally responsible workers. In an as yet unpublished thesis, Pierre Hauptman, one of Proudhon's most recent exponents, comments that workers' self-management would have no meaning if it were not interpreted in this way.

The libertarian communists saw fit to criticize Proudhon's *mutuellisme* and the more logical collectivism of Bakunin for not having determined the way in which labour would be remunerated in a socialist system. These critics seemed to have overlooked the fact that the two founders of anarchism were anxious not to lay down a rigid pattern of society prematurely. They wanted to leave the self-management associations the widest choice in this matter. The libertarian communists themselves were to provide the justification for this flexibility and refusal to jump to conclusions, so different from their own impatient forecasts: they stressed that in the ideal system of their choice "labour would produce more than enough for all" and that "bourgeois" norms of remuneration could only be replaced by specifically "communist" norms when the era of abundance had set in, and not before. In 1884 Malatesta, drafting the program for

management succeed? "On the reply to this... depends the whole future of the workers. If it is affirmative an entire new world will open up for humanity; if it is negative the proletarian can take it as settled.... There is no hope for him in this wicked world."

The Bases of Exchange

How were dealings between the different workers' associations to be organised? At first Proudhon maintained that the exchange value of all goods could be measured by the amount of labour necessary to produce them. The workers were to be paid in "work vouchers"; trading agencies or social shops were to be set up where they would buy goods at retail prices calculated in hours of work. Large-scale trade would be carried on through a compensatory clearinghouse or People's Bank which would accept payment in work vouchers. This bank would also serve as a credit establishment lending to workers' associations the sums needed for effective operation. The loans would be interest free.

This so-called *mutuelliste* scheme was rather utopian and certainly difficult to operate in a capitalist system. Early in 1849 Proudhon set up the People's Bank and in six weeks some 20,000 people joined, but it was short-lived. It was certainly farfetched to believe that *mutuellisme* would spread like a patch of oil and to exclaim, as Proudhon did then: "It really is the new world, the promised society which is being grafted on to the old and gradually transforming it!"

The idea of wages based on the number of hours worked is debatable on many grounds. The libertarian communists of the Kropotkin school — Malatesta, Elise Reclus, Carlo Cafiero — did not fail to criticize it. In the first place, they thought it unjust. Cafiero argued that "three hours of Peter's work may be worth five of Paul's." Other factors than duration must be considered in determining the value of labour: intensity, professional and intellectual training, etc. The family commitments of the workers must also be taken into account.¹⁶ Moreover, in a collectivist regime the worker remains a wage slave of the community that buys and supervises his labour. Payment by hours of work performed cannot be an ideal solution; at best it would be a temporary expedient. We must put an end to the morality of account books, to the philosophy of "credit and debit." This method of remuneration, derived from modified individualism, is in contradiction to collective ownership of the means of production,

common." It is high time to call a halt: "Centralisation has grown stronger and stronger..., things have reached... the point where society and government can no longer coexist." "From the top of the hierarchy to the bottom there is nothing in the State which is not an abuse to be reformed, a form of parasitism to be suppressed, or an instrument of tyranny to be destroyed. And you speak to us of preserving the State, and increasing the power of the State! Away with you — you are no revolutionary!"

Bakunin had an equally clear and painful vision of an increasingly totalitarian State. He saw the forces of world counter-revolution, "based on enormous budgets, permanent armies, and a formidable bureaucracy" and endowed "with all the terrible means of action given to them by modern centralisation," as becoming "an immense, crushing, threatening reality."

Hostility to Bourgeois Democracy

The anarchist denounces the deception of bourgeois democracy even more bitterly than does the authoritarian socialist. The bourgeois democratic State, christened "the nation," does not seem to Stirner any less to be feared than the old absolutist State. "The monarch... was a very poor man compared with the new one, the 'sovereign nation.' In liberalism we have only the continuation of the ancient contempt for the Self." "Certainly many privileges have been eliminated through time but only for the benefit of the State... and not at all to strengthen my Self."

In Proudhon's view "democracy is nothing but a constitutional tyrant." The people were declared sovereign by a "trick" of our forefathers. In reality they are a monkey king which has kept only the title of sovereign without the magnificence and grandeur. The people rule but do not govern, and delegate their sovereignty through the periodic exercise of universal suffrage, abdicating their power anew every three or five years. The dynasts have been driven from the throne but the royal prerogative has been preserved intact. In the hands of a people whose education has been wilfully neglected the ballot is a cunning swindle benefiting only the united barons of industry, trade, and property.

The very theory of the sovereignty of the people contains its own negation. If the entire people were truly sovereign there would no longer be either government or governed; the sovereign would be reduced to nothing;

the State would have no *raison d'être*, would be identical with society and disappear into industrial organisation.

Bakunin saw that the "representative system, far from being a guarantee for the people, on the contrary, creates and safeguards the continued existence of a governmental aristocracy against the people." Universal suffrage is a sleight of hand, a bait, a safety valve, and a mask behind which "hides the really despotic power of the State based on the police, the banks, and the army," "an excellent way of oppressing and ruining a people in the name of the so-called popular will which serves to camouflage it."

The anarchist does not believe in emancipation by the ballot. Proudhon was an abstentionist, at least in theory, thinking that "the social revolution is seriously compromised if it comes about through the political revolution." To vote would be a contradiction, an act of weakness and complicity with the corrupt regime: "We must make war on all the old parties together, using parliament as a legal battlefield, but staying outside it." "Universal suffrage is the counter-revolution," and to constitute itself a class the proletariat must first "secede from" bourgeois democracy.

However, the militant Proudhon frequently departed from this position of principle. In June 1848 he let himself be elected to parliament and was briefly stuck in the parliamentary glue. On two occasions, during the partial elections of September 1848 and the presidential elections of December 10 of the same year, he supported the candidacy of Raspail, a spokesman of the extreme Left. He even went so far as to allow himself to be blinded by the tactic of the "the lesser evil," expressing a preference for General Cavaignac, persecutor of the Paris proletariat, over the apprentice dictator Louis Napoleon. Much later, in 1863 and 1864, he did advocate returning blank ballot papers, but as a demonstration against the imperial dictatorship, not in opposition to universal suffrage, which he now christened "the democratic principle par excellence."

Bakunin and his supporters in the First International objected to the epithet "abstentionist" hurled at them by the Marxists. For them, boycotting the ballot box was a simple tactical question and not an article of faith. Although they gave priority to the class struggle in the economic field, they would not agree that they ignored "politics." They were not rejecting "politics," but only bourgeois politics. They did not disapprove of a political revolution unless it was to come before the social revolution. They steered clear of other movements only if these were not directed

However, the optimism which Proudhon had expressed in 1848 with regard to self-management was to prove unjustified. Not many years later, in 1857, he severely criticized the existing workers' associations; inspired by naive, utopian illusions, they had paid the price of their lack of experience. They had become narrow and exclusive, had functioned as collective employers, and had been carried away by hierarchical and managerial concepts. All the abuses of capitalist companies "were exaggerated further in these so-called brotherhoods." They had been torn by discord, rivalry, defections, and betrayals. Once their managers had learned the business concerned, they retired to "set up as bourgeois employers on their own account." In other instances, the members had insisted on dividing up the resources. In 1848 several hundred workers' associations had been set up; nine years later only twenty remained.

As opposed to this narrow and particularist attitude, Proudhon advocated a "universal" and "synthetic" concept of self-management. The task of the future was far more than just "getting a few hundred workers into associations"; it was "the economic transformation of a nation of thirty-six million souls." The workers' associations of the future should work for all and not "operate for the benefit of a few." Self-management, therefore, required the members to have some education: "A man is not born a member of an association, he becomes one." The hardest task before the association is to "educate the members." It is more important to create a "fund of men" than to form a "mass of capital."

With regard to the legal aspect, it had been Proudhon's first idea to vest the ownership of their undertaking in the workers' associations but now he rejected this narrow solution. In order to do this he distinguished between possession and ownership. Ownership is absolute, aristocratic, feudal; possession is democratic, republican, egalitarian: it consists of the enjoyment of an usufruct which can neither be alienated, nor given away, nor sold. The workers should hold their means of production in *alleu* like the ancient Germans,¹⁵ but would not be the outright owners. Property would be replaced by federal, co-operative ownership vested not in the State but in the producers as a whole, united in a vast agricultural and industrial federation.

Proudhon waxed enthusiastic about the future of such a revised and corrected form of self-management: "It is not false rhetoric that states this, it is an economic and social necessity: the time is near when we shall be unable to progress on any but these new conditions.... Social classes... must merge into one single producers' association." Would self-

cial persons of distinction" who would teach the workers business methods and receive fixed salaries in return: there is "room for all in the sunshine of the revolution."

This libertarian concept of self-management is at the opposite pole from the paternalistic, statist form of self-management set out by Louis Blanc in a draft law of September 15, 1849. The author of *The Organisation of Labour* wanted to create workers' associations sponsored and financed by the State. He proposed an arbitrary division of the profits as follows: 25 percent to a capital amortisation fund; 25 percent to a social security fund; 25 percent to a reserve fund; 25 percent to be divided among the workers.¹⁴

Proudhon would have none of self-management of this kind. In his view the associated workers must not "submit to the State," but "be the State itself." "Association... can do everything and reform everything without interference from authority, can encroach upon authority and subjugate it." Proudhon wanted "to go toward government through association, not to association through government." He issued a warning against the illusion, cherished in the dreams of authoritarian socialists, that the State could tolerate free self-management. How could it endure "the formation of enemy enclaves alongside a centralised authority"? Proudhon prophetically warned: "While centralisation continues to endow the State with colossal force, nothing can be achieved by spontaneous initiative or by the independent actions of groups and individuals."

It should be stressed that in the congresses of the First International the libertarian idea of self-management prevailed over the statist concept. At the Lausanne Congress in 1867 the committee reporter, a Belgian called Cesar de Paepe, proposed that the State should become the owner of undertakings that were to be nationalized. At that time Charles Longuet was a libertarian, and he replied: "All right, on condition that it is understood that we define the State as 'the collective of the citizens'..., also that these services will be administered not by state functionaries... but by groupings of workers." The debate continued the following year (1868) at the Brussels Congress and this time the same committee reporter took care to be precise on this point: "Collective property would belong to society as a whole, but would be conceded to associations of workers. The State would be no more than a federation of various groups of workers." Thus clarified, the resolution was passed.

to the immediate and complete emancipation of the workers. What they feared and denounced were ambiguous electoral alliances with radical bourgeois parties of the 1848 type, or "popular fronts," as they would be called today. They also feared that when workers were elected to parliament and translated into bourgeois living conditions, they would cease to be workers and turn into Statesmen, becoming bourgeois, perhaps even more bourgeois than the bourgeoisie itself.

However, the anarchist attitude toward universal suffrage is far from logical or consistent. Some considered the ballot as a last expedient. Others, more uncompromising, regarded its use as damnable in any circumstances and made it a matter of doctrinal purity. Thus, at the time of the *Cartel des Gauches* (Alliance of the Left) elections in May 1924, Malatesta refused to make any concession. He admitted that in certain circumstances the outcome of an election might have "good" or "bad" consequences and that the result would sometimes depend on anarchist votes, especially if the forces of the opposing political groupings were fairly evenly balanced. "But no matter! Even if some minimal progress were to be the direct result of an electoral victory, the anarchist should not rush to the polling stations." He concluded: "Anarchists have always kept themselves pure, and remain the revolutionary party par excellence, the party of the future, because they have been able to resist the siren song of elections."

The inconsistency of anarchist doctrine on this matter was to be especially well illustrated in Spain. In 1930 the anarchists joined in a common front with bourgeois democrats to overthrow the dictator, Primo de Rivera. The following year, despite their official abstention, many went to the polls in the municipal elections which led to the overthrow of the monarchy. In the general election of November 1933 they strongly recommended abstention from voting, and this returned a violently anti-labour Right to power for more than two years. The anarchists had taken care to announce in advance that if their abstention led to a victory for reaction they would launch the social revolution. They soon attempted to do so but in vain and at the cost of heavy losses (dead, wounded, and imprisoned).

When the parties of the Left came together in the Popular Front in 1936, the central anarcho-syndicalist organisation was hard pressed to know what attitude to adopt. Finally it declared itself, very half-heartedly, for abstention, but its campaign was so tepid as to go unheard by the masses who were in any case already committed to participation in the

elections. By going to the polls, the mass of voters insured the triumph of the Popular Front (263 left-wing deputies, as against 181 others).

It should be noted that in spite of their savage attacks on bourgeois democracy, the anarchists admitted that it is relatively progressive. Even Stirner, the most intransigent, occasionally let slip the word "progress." Proudhon conceded: "When a people passes from the monarchical to the democratic State, some progress is made." And Bakunin said: "It should not be thought that we want... to criticize the bourgeois government in favour of monarchy.... The most imperfect republic is a thousand times better than the most enlightened monarchy.... The democratic system gradually educates the masses to public life." This disproves Lenin's view that "some anarchists" proclaim "that the form of oppression is a matter of indifference to the proletariat." This also dispels the fear expressed by Henri Arvon in his little book *L'Anarchisme* that anarchist opposition to democracy could be confused with counter-revolutionary opposition.

Critique of Authoritarian Socialism

The anarchists were unanimous in subjecting authoritarian socialism to a barrage of severe criticism. At the time when they made violent and satirical attacks these were not entirely well founded, for those to whom they were addressed were either primitive or "vulgar" communists, whose thought had not yet been fertilized by Marxist humanism, or else, in the case of Marx and Engels themselves, were not as set on authority and state control as the anarchists made out.

Although in the nineteenth century authoritarian tendencies in socialist thought were still embryonic and undeveloped, they have proliferated in our time. In the face of these excrescences, the anarchist critique seems less tendentious, less unjust; sometimes it even seems to have a prophetic ring.

Stirner accepted many of the premises of communism but with the following qualification: the profession of communist faith is a first step toward total emancipation of the victims of our society, but they will become completely "disalienated," and truly able to develop their individuality, only by advancing beyond communism.

As Stirner saw it, in a communist system the worker remains subject to the rule of a society of workers. His work is imposed on him by society, and

authoritarian communism) is oppression and servitude. Thus, Proudhon sought a combination of property and community: this was association. The means of production and exchange must be controlled neither by capitalist companies nor by the State. Since they are to the men who work in them "what the hive is to the bee," they must be managed by associations of workers, and only thus will collective powers cease to be "alienated" for the benefit of a few exploiters. "We, the workers, associated or about to be associated," wrote Proudhon in the style of a manifesto,

"do not need the State.... Exploitation by the State always means rulers and wage slaves. We want the government of man by man no more than the exploitation of man by man. Socialism is the opposite of governmentalism.... We want these associations to be... the first components of a vast federation of associations and groups united in the common bond of the democratic and social republic.

Proudhon went into detail and enumerated precisely the essential features of workers' self-management:

- Every associated individual to have an indivisible share in the property of the company.
- Each worker to take his share of the heavy and repugnant tasks.
- Each to go through the gamut of operations and instruction, of grades and activities, to insure that he has the widest training. Proudhon was insistent on the point that "the worker must go through all the operations of the industry he is attached to."
- Office-holders to be elected and regulations submitted to the associates for approval.
- Remuneration to be proportionate to the nature of the position held, the degree of skill, and the responsibility carried. Every associate to share in the profits in proportion to the service he has given.
- Each to be free to set his own hours, carry on his duties, and to leave the association at will.
- The associated workers to choose their leaders, engineers, architects, and accountants. Proudhon stressed the fact that the proletariat still lacks technicians: hence the need to bring into workers' self-management programs "industrial and commer-

or preached by doctrinaires, it was not the State which provided the original stimulus, but the people. Proudhon urged the workers to organise in this way in every part of the Republic, to draw in small property, trade, and industry, then large property and establishments, and, finally, the greatest enterprises of all (mines, canals, railways, etc.), and thus “become masters of all.”

The present tendency is to remember only Proudhon’s naive and passing idea of preserving small-scale trade and artisans’ workshops. This was certainly naive, and doubtless uneconomic, but his thinking on this point was ambivalent. Proudhon was a living contradiction: he castigated property as a source of injustice and exploitation and had a weakness for it, although only to the extent that he saw in it a guarantee of the independence of the individual. Moreover, Proudhon is too often confused with what Bakunin called “the little so-called Proudhonian coterie” which gathered around him in his last years. This rather reactionary group was stillborn. In the First International it tried in vain to put across private ownership of the means of production against collectivism. The chief reason this group was short-lived was that most of its adherents were all too easily convinced by Bakunin’s arguments and abandoned their so-called Proudhonian ideas to support collectivism.

In the last analysis, this group, who called themselves *mutuellistes*, were only partly opposed to collectivism: they rejected it for agriculture because of the individualism of the French peasant, but accepted it for transport, and in matters of industrial self-management actually demanded it while rejecting its name. Their fear of the word was largely due to their uneasiness in the face of the temporary united front set up against them by Bakunin’s collectivist disciples and certain authoritarian Marxists who were almost open supporters of state control of the economy.

Proudhon really moved with the times and realized that it is impossible to turn back the clock. He was realistic enough to understand that “small industry is as stupid as petty culture” and recorded this view in his *Carnets*. With regard to large-scale modern industry requiring a large labour force, he was resolutely collectivist: “In future, large-scale industry and wide culture must be the fruit of association.” “We have no choice in the matter,” he concluded, and waxed indignant that anyone had dared to suggest that he was opposed to technical progress.

In his collectivism he was, however, as categorically opposed to statism. Property must be abolished. The community (as it is understood by

remains for him a task. Did not the communist Weitling⁹ write: “Faculties can only be developed in so far as they do not disrupt the harmony of society”? To which Stirner replied: “Whether I were to be ‘loyal’ to a tyrant or to Weitling’s ‘society’ I would suffer the same absence of rights.”

According to Stirner, the communist does not think of the man behind the worker. He overlooks the most important issue: to give man the opportunity to enjoy himself as an individual after he has fulfilled his task as a producer. Above all, Stirner glimpsed the danger that in a communist society the collective appropriation of the means of production would give the State more exorbitant powers than it has at present:

“By abolishing all private property communism makes me even more dependent on others, on the generality or totality [of society], and, in spite of its attacks on the State, it intends to establish its own State,... a state of affairs which paralyzes my freedom to act and exerts sovereign authority over me. Communism is rightly indignant about the wrongs which I suffer at the hands of individual proprietors, but the power which it will put into the hands of the total society is even more terrible.”

Proudhon was just as dissatisfied with the “governmental, dictatorial, authoritarian, doctrinaire communist system” which “starts from the principle that the individual is entirely subordinate to the collectivity.” The communist idea of the State is exactly the same as that of the former masters and much less liberal: “Like an army that has captured the enemy’s guns, communism has simply turned property’s artillery against the army of property. The slave always apes his master.” And Proudhon describes in the following terms the political system which he attributes to the communists:

“A compact democracy — apparently based on the dictatorship of the masses, but in which the masses have only power enough to insure universal servitude, according to the following prescription borrowed from the old absolutism:

The indivisibility of power;

All-absorbing centralism;

The systematic destruction of all individual, corporate, or local thought believed to be subversive;

An inquisitorial police force."

The authoritarian socialists call for a "revolution from above." They "believe that the State must continue after the Revolution. They preserve the State, power, authority, and government, increasing their scope still further. All they do is to change the titles... as though changing the names were enough to transform things!" And Proudhon concludes by saying: "Government is by its nature counter-revolutionary... give power to a Saint Vincent de Paul and he will be a Guizot ¹⁰ or a Talleyrand." Bakunin extended this criticism of authoritarian socialism:

I detest communism because it is the negation of liberty and I cannot conceive anything human without liberty. I am not a communist because communism concentrates all the powers of society and absorbs them into the State, because it leads inevitably to the centralisation of property in the hands of the State, while I want to see the State abolished. I want the complete elimination of the authoritarian principle of state tutelage which has always subjected, oppressed, exploited, and depraved men while claiming to moralize and civilize them. I want society, and collective or social property, to be organised from the bottom up through free association and not from the top down by authority of any kind.... In that sense I am a collectivist and not at all a communist.

Soon after making the above speech Bakunin joined the First International. And there he and his supporters came into conflict not only with Marx and Engels but with others far more vulnerable to his attacks than the two founders of scientific socialism: on the one hand, the German social democrats for whom the State was a fetish and who proposed the use of the ballot and electoral alliances to introduce an ambiguous "People's State" (*Volkstaat*); on the other hand, the Blanquists ¹¹ who sang the virtues of a transitional dictatorship by a revolutionary minority. Bakunin fought these divergent but equally authoritarian concepts tooth and nail, while Marx and Engels oscillated between them for tactical reasons but finally decided to disavow both under the harassment of anarchist criticism.

However, the friction between Bakunin and Marx arose mainly from the sectarian and personal way in which the latter tried to control the

The twentieth-century anarchist Voline developed and clarified this idea:

"A mistaken — or, more often, deliberately inaccurate — interpretation alleges that the libertarian concept means the absence of all organisation. This is entirely false: it is not a matter of "organisation" or "non-organisation," but of two different principles of organisation.... Of course, say the anarchists, society must be organised. However, the new organisation... must be established freely, socially, and, above all, from below. The principle of organisation must not issue from a centre created in advance to capture the whole and impose itself upon it but, on the contrary, it must come from all sides to create nodes of co-ordination, natural centres to serve all these points.... On the other hand, the other kind of "organisation," copied from that of the old oppressive and exploitative society... would exaggerate all the blemishes of the old society.... It could then only be maintained by means of a new artifice."

In effect, the anarchists would be not only protagonists of true organisation but "first-class organisers," as Henri Lefebvre admitted in his book on the Commune. But this philosopher thought he saw a contradiction here — "a rather surprising contradiction which we find repeatedly in the history of the working-class movement up to present times, especially in Spain." It can only "astonish" those for whom libertarians are *a priori* disorganisers.

Self-Management

When Marx and Engels drafted the Communist Manifesto of 1848, on the eve of the February Revolution, they foresaw, at any rate for a long transitional period, all the means of production centralised in the hands of an all-embracing State. They took over Louis Blanc's authoritarian idea of conscripting both agricultural and industrial workers into "armies of labour." Proudhon was the first to propound an anti-statist form of economic management.

During the February Revolution workers' associations for production sprang up spontaneously in Paris and in Lyon. In 1848 this beginning of self-management seemed to Proudhon far more *the* revolutionary event than did the political revolution. It had not been invented by a theoretician

a few years the absolute law of property will have everywhere been replaced by the relative and mobile law of industrial co-operation, and it will then be necessary to reconstruct this cardboard castle from top to bottom." Bakunin, in turn, recognized "the immense and undeniable service rendered to humanity by the French Revolution which is father to us all." The principle of authority has been eliminated from the people's consciousness forever and order imposed from above has henceforth become impossible. All that remains is to "organise society so that it can live without government." Bakunin relied on popular tradition to achieve this. "In spite of the oppressive and harmful tutelage of the State," the masses have, through the centuries, "spontaneously developed within themselves many, if not all, of the essential elements of the material and moral order of real human unity."

The Need for Organisation

Anarchist theory does not see itself as a synonym for disorganisation. Proudhon was the first to proclaim that anarchism is not disorder but order, is the natural order in contrast to the artificial order imposed from above, is true unity as against the false unity brought about by constraint. Such a society "thinks, speaks, and acts like a man, precisely because it is no longer represented by a man, no longer recognizes personal authorities; because, like every organised living being, like the infinite of Pascal, it has its centre everywhere and its circumference nowhere." Anarchy is "organised, living society," "the highest degree of liberty and order to which humanity can aspire." Perhaps some anarchists thought otherwise but the Italian Errico Malatesta called them to order:

"Under the influence of the authoritarian education given to them, they think that authority is the soul of social organisation and repudiate the latter in order to combat the former.... Those anarchists opposed to organisation make the fundamental error of believing that organisation is impossible without authority. Having accepted this hypothesis they reject any kind of organisation rather than accept the minimum of authority.... If we believed that organisation could not exist without authority we would be authoritarians, because we would still prefer the authority which imprisons and saddens life to the disorganisation which makes it impossible."

International, especially after 1870. There is no doubt that there were wrongs on both sides in this quarrel, in which the stake was the control of the organisation and thus of the whole movement of the international working class. Bakunin was not without fault and his case against Marx often lacked fairness and even good faith. What is important for the modern reader, however, is that as early as 1870 Bakunin had the merit of raising the alarm against certain ideas of organisation of the working-class movement and of proletarian power which were much later to distort the Russian Revolution. Sometimes unjustly, and sometimes with reason, Bakunin claimed to see in Marxism the embryo of what was to become Leninism and then the malignant growth of Stalinism.

Bakunin maliciously attributed to Marx and Engels ideas which these two men never expressed openly, if indeed they harboured them at all:

"But, it will be said all the workers... cannot become scholars; and is it not enough that with this organisation [International] there is a group of men who have mastered the science, philosophy, and politics of socialism as completely as is possible in our day, so that the majority... can be certain of remaining on the right road to the final emancipation of the proletariat... simply by faithfully obeying their directions?... We have heard this line of reasoning developed by innuendo with all sorts of subtle and skilful qualifications but never openly expressed — they are not brave enough or frank enough for that."

Bakunin continued his diatribe:

"Beginning from the basic principle... that thought takes precedence over life, and abstract theory over social practice, and inferring that sociological science must become the starting point of social upheaval and reconstruction, they were forced to the conclusion that since thought, theory, and science are, for the present at any rate, the exclusive possessions of a very small number of persons, that minority must direct social life."

The supposed Popular State would be nothing but the despotic government of the popular masses by a new and very narrow aristocracy of knowledge, real or pretended.

Bakunin translated Marx's major work, *Das Kapital*, into Russian, had a lively admiration for his intellectual capacity, fully accepted the

materialist conception of history, and appreciated better than anyone Marx's theoretical contribution to the emancipation of the working class. What he would not concede was that intellectual superiority can confer upon anyone the right to lead the working-class movement:

"One asks oneself how a man as intelligent as Marx could conceive of such a heresy against common sense and historical experience as the notion that a group of individuals, however intelligent and well-intentioned, could become the soul and the unifying and directing will of a revolutionary movement and of the economic organisation of the proletariat of all countries.... The creation of a universal dictatorship..., a dictatorship which would somehow perform the task of chief engineer of the world revolution, regulating and steering the insurrectionary movements of the masses of all nations as one steers a machine..., the creation of such a dictatorship would in itself suffice to kill the revolution and paralyze and distort all popular movements.... And what is one to think of an international congress which, in the supposed interest of this revolution, imposes on the proletariat of the civilized world a government invested with dictatorial powers?"

No doubt Bakunin was distorting the thoughts of Marx quite severely in attributing to him such a universally authoritarian concept, but the experience of the Third International has since shown that the danger of which he warned did eventually materialize.

The Russian exile showed himself equally clear-sighted about the danger of state control under a communist regime. According to him, the aspirations of "doctrinaire" socialists would "put the people into a new harness." They doubtless profess, as do the libertarians, to see any State as oppressive, but maintain that only dictatorship — their own, of course — can create freedom for the people; to which the reply is that every dictatorship must seek to last as long as possible. Instead of leaving it to the people to destroy the State, they want to "transfer it... into the hands of the benefactors, guardians, and teachers, the leaders of the Communist Party." They see quite well that such a government, "however democratic its forms, will be a real dictatorship," and "console themselves with the idea that it will be temporary and short-lived." But no! Bakunin retorted. This supposedly interim dictatorship will inevitably lead to "the reconstruction of the State, its privileges, its inequalities, and all its oppressions," to the formation of a governmental aristocracy "which

2. In Search of a New Society

Anarchism is not Utopian

Because anarchism is constructive, anarchist theory emphatically rejects the charge of utopianism. It uses the historical method in an attempt to prove that the society of the future is not an anarchist invention, but the actual product of the hidden effects of past events. Proudhon affirmed that for 6,000 years humanity had been crushed by an inexorable system of authority but had been sustained by a "secret virtue": "Beneath the apparatus of government, under the shadow of its political institutions, society was slowly and silently producing its own organisation, making for itself a new order which expressed its vitality and autonomy."

However harmful government may have been, it contained its own negation. It was always "a phenomenon of collective life, the public exercise of the powers of our law, an expression of social spontaneity, all serving to prepare humanity for a higher state. What humanity seeks in religion and calls 'God' is itself. What the citizen seeks in government... is likewise himself — it is liberty." The French Revolution hastened this inexorable advance toward anarchy: "The day that our fathers... stated the principle of the free exercise of all his faculties by man as a citizen, on that day authority was repudiated in heaven and on earth, and government, even by delegation, became impossible."

The Industrial Revolution did the rest. From then on politics was overtaken by the economy and subordinated to it. Government could no longer escape the direct competition of producers and became in reality no more than the relation between different interests. This revolution was completed by the growth of the proletariat. In spite of its protestations, authority now expressed only socialism: "The Napoleonic code is as useless to the new society as the Platonic republic: within

masses, such a pretension would be as illusory as that of the Bolsheviks and for the same reasons."

However, the Spanish anarchists, in their turn, were to experience the need to organise an ideologically conscious minority, the Iberian Anarchist Federation (FAI), within their vast trade union organisation, the National Confederation of Labour (CNT). This was to combat the reformist tendencies of some "pure" syndicalists and the manoeuvres of the agents of the "dictatorship of the proletariat." The FAI drew its inspiration from the ideas of Bakunin, and so tried to enlighten rather than to direct. The relatively high libertarian consciousness of many of the rank-and file members of the CNT also helped it to avoid the excesses of the authoritarian revolutionary parties. It did not, however, perform its part as guide very well, being clumsy and hesitant about its tutelage over the trade unions, irresolute in its strategy, and more richly endowed with activists and demagogues than with revolutionaries as clear-thinking on the level of theory as on that of practice.

Relations between the masses and the conscious minority constitute a problem to which no full solution has been found by the Marxists or even by the anarchists, and one on which it seems that the last word has not yet been said.

again begins to exploit and rule in the name of common happiness or to save the State." And this State will be "the more absolute because its despotism is carefully concealed under obsequious respect... for the will of the people."

Bakunin, always particularly lucid, believed in the Russian Revolution: "If the workers of the West wait too long, Russian peasants will set them an example." In Russia, the revolution will be basically "anarchistic." But he was fearful of the outcome: the revolutionaries might well simply carry on the State of Peter the Great which was "based on... suspension of all expressions of the life of the people," for "one can change the label of a State and its form... but the foundation will remain unchanged." Either the State must be destroyed, or one must "reconcile oneself to the vilest and most dangerous lie of our century...: *Red Bureaucracy*." Bakunin summed it up as follows: "Take the most radical of revolutionaries and place him on the throne of all the Russias or give him dictatorial powers... and before the year is out he will be worse than the Czar himself."

In Russia Voline was participant, witness, and historian of the Revolution, and afterward recorded that events had taught the same lesson as the masters. Yes, indeed, socialist power and social revolution "are contradictory factors"; they cannot be reconciled:

"A revolution which is inspired by state socialism and adopts this form, even 'provisionally' and 'temporarily,' is lost: it takes a wrong road down an ever-steeper slope.... All political power inevitably creates a privileged position for those who exercise it.... Having taken over the Revolution, mastered it, and harnessed it, those in power are obliged to create the bureaucratic and repressive apparatus which is indispensable for any authority that wants to maintain itself, to command, to give orders, in a word, to govern.... All authority seeks to some extent to control social life. Its existence predisposes the masses to passivity, its very presence suffocates any spirit of initiative.... 'Communist' power is... a real bludgeon. Swollen with 'authority'... it fears every independent action. Any autonomous action is immediately seen as suspect, threatening... for such authority wants sole control of the tiller. Initiative from any other source is seen as an intrusion upon its domain and an infringement of its prerogatives and, therefore, unacceptable."

Further, anarchists categorically deny the need for “provisional” and “temporary” stages. In 1936, on the eve of the Spanish Revolution, Diego Abad de Santillan placed authoritarian socialism on the horns of a dilemma: “Either the revolution gives social wealth to the producers, or it does not. If it does, the producers organise themselves for collective production and distribution and there is nothing left for the State to do. If it does not give social wealth to the producers, the revolution is nothing but a deception and the State goes on.” One can say that the dilemma is oversimplified here; it would be less so if it were translated into terms of intent: the anarchists are not so naive as to dream that all the remnants of the State would disappear overnight, but they have the will to make them wither away as quickly as possible; while the authoritarians, on the other hand, are satisfied with the perspective of the indefinite survival of a “temporary” State, arbitrarily termed a “Workers’ State.”

Sources of Inspiration: the Individual

The anarchist sets two sources of revolutionary energy against the constraints and hierarchies of authoritarian socialism: the individual, and the spontaneity of the masses. Some anarchists are more individualistic than social, some more social than individualistic. However, one cannot conceive of a libertarian who is not an individualist. The observations made by Augustin Hamon from the survey mentioned earlier confirm this analysis.

Max Stirner¹² rehabilitated the individual at a time when the philosophical field was dominated by Hegelian anti-individualism and most reformers in the social field had been led by the misdeeds of bourgeois egotism to stress its opposite: was not the very word “socialism” created as antonym to “individualism”?

Stirner exalted the intrinsic value of the unique individual, that is to say, one cast in a single unrepeatable mould (an idea which has been confirmed by recent biological research). For a long time, this thinker remained isolated in anarchist circles, an eccentric followed by only a tiny sect of intelligent individualists. Today, the boldness and scope of his thought appear in a new light. The contemporary world seems to have set itself the task of rescuing the individual from all the forms of alienation which crush him’ those of individual slavery and those of totalitarian conformism. In a famous article written in 1933, Simone Weil

Much later, Rosa Luxemburg was to elucidate what Bakunin had surmised: that the contradiction between libertarian spontaneity and the need for action by conscious vanguards would only be fully resolved when science and the working class became fused, and the masses became fully conscious, needing no more “leaders,” but only “executive organs” of their “conscious action.” After emphasizing that the proletariat still lacked science and organisation, the Russian anarchist reached the conclusion that the International could only become an instrument of emancipation “when it had caused the science, philosophy, and politics of socialism to penetrate the reflective consciousness of each of its members.”

However theoretically satisfying this synthesis might be, it was a draft drawn on a very distant future. Until historical evolution made it possible to accomplish it, the anarchists remained, like the Marxists, more or less imprisoned by contradiction. It was to rend the Russian Revolution, torn between the spontaneous power of the soviets and the claim of the Bolshevik Party to a “directing role.” It was to show itself in the Spanish Revolution, where the libertarians were to swing from one extreme to the other, from the mass movement to the conscious anarchist elite.

Two historical examples will suffice to illustrate this contradiction.

The anarchists were to draw one categorical conclusion from the experience of the Russian Revolution: a condemnation of the “leading role” of the Party. Voline formulated it in this way:

“The key idea of anarchism is simple: no party, or political or ideological group, even if it sincerely desires to do so, will ever succeed in emancipating the working masses by placing itself above or outside them in order to ‘govern’ or ‘guide’ them. True emancipation can only be brought about by the direct action... of those concerned, the workers themselves, through their own class organisations (production syndicates, factory committees, co-operatives, etc.) and not under the banner of any political party or ideological body. Their emancipation must be based on concrete action and ‘self-administration,’ aided but not controlled by revolutionaries working from within the masses and not from above them.... The anarchist idea and the true emancipatory revolution can never be brought to fruition by anarchists as such but only by the vast masses..., anarchists, or other revolutionaries in general, are required only to enlighten or aid them in certain situations. If anarchists maintained that they could bring about a social revolution by “guiding” the

Before his conversion to anarchism in 1864, Bakunin was involved in conspiracies and secret societies and became familiar with the typically Blanquist idea that minority action must precede the awakening of the broad masses and combine with their most advanced elements after dragging them out of their lethargy. The problem appeared different in the workers' International, when that vast movement was at last established. Although he had become an anarchist, Bakunin remained convinced of the need for a conscious vanguard: "For revolution to triumph over reaction the unity of revolutionary thought and action must have an organ in the midst of the popular anarchy which will be the very life and the source of all the energy of the revolution." A group, small or large, of individuals inspired by the same idea, and sharing a common purpose, will produce "a natural effect on the masses." "Ten, twenty, or thirty men with a clear understanding and good organisation, knowing what they want and where they are going, can easily carry with them a hundred, two hundred, three hundred or even more." "We must create the well-organised and rightly inspired general staffs of the leaders of the mass movement."

The methods advocated by Bakunin are very similar to what is nowadays termed "infiltration." It consists of working clandestinely upon the most intelligent and influential individuals in each locality "so that [each] organisation should conform to our ideas as far as possible. That is the whole secret of our influence." The anarchists must be like "invisible pilots" in the midst of the stormy masses. They must direct them not by "ostensible power," but by "a dictatorship without insignia, title, or official rights, all the more powerful because it will have none of the marks of power." Bakunin was quite aware how little his terminology ("leaders," "dictatorship," etc.) differed from that of the opponents of anarchism, and replied in advance "to anyone who alleges that action organised in this way is yet another assault upon the liberty of the masses, an attempt to create a new authoritarian power": No! the vanguard must be neither the benefactor nor the dictatorial leader of the people but simply the midwife to its self-liberation. It can achieve nothing more than to spread among the masses ideas which correspond with their instincts. The rest can and must be done by the people themselves. The "revolutionary authorities" (Bakunin did not draw back from using this term but excused it by expressing the hope that they would be "as few as possible") were not to impose the revolution on the masses but arouse it in their midst; were not to subject them to any form of organisation, but stimulate their autonomous organisation from below to the top.

complained of not finding in Marxist writings any answer to questions arising from the need to defend the individual against the new forms of oppression coming after classical capitalist oppression. Stirner set out to fill this serious gap as early as the mid-nineteenth century.

He wrote in a lively style, crackling with aphorisms: "Do not seek in self-renunciation a freedom which denies your very selves, but seek your own selves... Let each of you be an all-powerful I." There is no freedom but that which the individual conquers for himself. Freedom given or conceded is not freedom but "stolen goods." "There is no judge but myself who can decide whether I am right or wrong." "The only things I have no right to do are those I do not do with a free mind." "You have the right to be whatever you have the strength to be." Whatever you accomplish you accomplish as a unique individual: "Neither the State, society, nor humanity can master this devil."

In order to emancipate himself, the individual must begin by putting under the microscope the intellectual baggage with which his parents and teachers have saddled him. He must undertake a vast operation of "desanctification," beginning with the so-called morality of the bourgeoisie: "Like the bourgeoisie itself, its native soil, it is still far too close to the heaven of religion, is still not free enough, and uncritically borrows bourgeois laws to transplant them to its own ground instead of working out new and independent doctrines."

Stirner was especially incensed by sexual morality. The "machinations" of Christianity "against passion" have simply been taken over by the secularists. They refused to listen to the appeal of the flesh and display their zeal against it. They "spit in the face of immorality." The moral prejudices inculcated by Christianity have an especially strong hold on the masses of the people. "The people furiously urge the police on against anything which seems to them immoral or even improper, and this public passion for morality protects the police as an institution far more effectively than a government could ever do."

Stirner foreshadowed modern psychoanalysis by observing and denouncing the internalization of parental moral values. From childhood we are consumed with moral prejudices. Morality has become "an internal force from which I cannot free myself," "its despotism is ten times worse than before, because it now scolds away from within my conscience." "The young are sent to school in herds to learn the old saws and when they know the verbiage of the old by heart they are said to have come of

age." Stirner declared himself an iconoclast: "God, conscience, duties, and laws are all errors which have been stuffed into our minds and hearts." The real seducers and corrupters of youth are the priests and parents who "muddy young hearts and stupefy young minds." If there is anything that "comes from the devil" it is surely this false divine voice which has been interpolated into the conscience.

In the process of rehabilitating the individual, Stirner also discovered the Freudian subconscious. The Self cannot be apprehended. Against it "the empire of thought, mind, and ratiocination crumbles"; it is inexpressible, inconceivable, incomprehensible, and through Stirner's lively aphorisms one seems to hear the first echoes of existentialist philosophy: "I start from a hypothesis by taking myself as hypothesis.... I use it solely for my enjoyment and satisfaction.... I exist only because I nourish my Self.... The fact that I am of absorbing interest to myself means that I exist."

Of course, the white heat of imagination in which Stirner wrote sometimes misled him into paradoxical statements. He let slip some antisocial aphorisms and arrived at the position that life in society is impossible: "We do not aspire to communal life but to a life apart." "The people is dead! Good-day, Self!" "The people's good fortune is my misfortune!" "If it is right for *me*, it is right. It is possible that it is wrong for others: let them take care of themselves!"

However, these occasional outbursts are probably not a fundamental part of his thinking and, in spite of his hermit's bluster, he aspired to communal life. Like most people who are introverted, isolated, shut in, he suffered acute nostalgia for it. To those who asked how he could live in society with his exclusiveness he replied that only the man who has comprehended his own "oneness" can have relations with his fellows. The individual needs help and friends; for example, if he writes books he needs readers. He joins with his fellow man in order to increase his strength and fulfill himself more completely through their combined strength than either could in isolation. "If you have several million others behind you to protect you, together you will become a great force and will easily be victorious" — but on one condition: these relations with others must be free and voluntary and always subject to repudiation. Stirner distinguishes a society already established, which is a constraint, from association, which is a voluntary act. "Society uses *you*, but you use association." Admittedly, association implies a sacrifice, a restriction upon freedom, but this sacrifice is not made for the common good: "It is my own personal interest that brings me to it."

apparently trivial causes." "One can foresee them, have presentiments of their approach.... but one can never accelerate their outbreak." "The anarchist social revolution... arises spontaneously in the hearts of the people, destroying all that hinders the generous upsurge of the life of the people in order thereafter to create new forms of free social life which will arise from the very depths of the soul of the people." Bakunin saw in the Commune of 1871 striking confirmation of his views. The Communards believed that "the action of individuals was almost nothing" in the social revolution and the "spontaneous action of the masses should be everything."

Like his predecessors, Kropotkin praised "this admirable sense of spontaneous organisation which the people... has in such a high degree, but is so rarely permitted to apply." He added, playfully, that "only he who has always lived with his nose buried in official papers and red tape could doubt it."

Having made all these generous and optimistic affirmations, both the anarchist and his brother and enemy the Marxist confront a grave contradiction. The spontaneity of the masses is essential, an absolute priority, but not sufficient in itself. The assistance of a revolutionary minority capable of thinking out the revolution has proved to be necessary to raise mass consciousness. How is this elite to be prevented from exploiting its intellectual superiority to usurp the role of the masses, paralyze their initiative, and even impose a new domination upon them?

After his idyllic exaltation of spontaneity, Proudhon came to admit the inertia of the masses, to deplore the prejudice in favour of governments, the deferential instinct and the inferiority complex which inhibit an upsurge of the people. Thus the collective action of the people must be stimulated, and if no revelation were to come to them from outside, the servitude of the lower classes might go on indefinitely. And he admitted that "in every epoch the ideas which stirred the masses had first been germinated in the minds of a few thinkers.... The multitude never took the initiative.... Individuality has priority in every movement of the human spirit." It would be ideal if these conscious minorities were to pass on to the people their science, the science of revolution. But in practice Proudhon seemed to be sceptical about such a synthesis: to expect it would be to underestimate the intrusive nature of authority. At best, it might be possible to "balance" the two elements.

strongest and most intelligent individuals... are at every moment of their lives both promoters and products of the desires and actions of the masses." The anarchist sees the revolutionary movement as the product of this interaction; thus, he regards individual action and autonomous collective action by the masses as equally fruitful and militant.

The Spanish anarchists were the intellectual heirs of Bakunin. Although enamored of socialisation, on the very eve of the 1936 Revolution they did not fail to make a solemn pledge to protect the sacred autonomy of the individual: "The eternal aspiration to be unique," wrote Diego Abad de Santillan, "will be expressed in a thousand ways: the individual will not be suffocated by levering down.... Individualism, personal taste, and originality will have adequate scope to express themselves."

Sources of Inspiration: the Masses

From the Revolution of 1848 Proudhon learned that the masses are the source of power of revolutions. At the end of 1849 he wrote: "Revolutions have no instigators; they come when fate beckons, and end with the exhaustion of the mysterious power that makes them flourish." "All revolutions have been carried through by the spontaneous action of the people; if occasionally governments have responded to the initiative of the people it was only because they were forced or constrained to do so. Almost always they blocked, repressed, struck." "When left to their own instincts the people almost always see better than when guided by the policy of leaders." "A social revolution... does not occur at the behest of a master with a ready-made theory, or at the dictate of a prophet. A truly organic revolution is a product of universal life, and although it has its messengers and executors it is really not the work of any one person." The revolution must be conducted from below and not from above. Once the revolutionary crisis is over social reconstruction should be the task of the popular masses themselves. Proudhon affirmed the "personality and autonomy of the masses."

Bakunin also repeated tirelessly that a social revolution can be neither decreed nor organised from above and can only be made and fully developed by spontaneous and continuous mass action. Revolutions come "like a thief in the night." They are "produced by the force of events." "They are long in preparation in the depths of the instinctive consciousness of the masses — then they explode, often precipitated by

Stirner was dealing with very contemporary problems, especially when he treated the question of political parties with special reference to the communists. He was severely critical of the conformism of parties: "One must follow one's party everywhere and anywhere, absolutely approving and defending its basic principles." "Members... bow to the slightest wishes of the party." "The party's program must "be for them certain, above question.... One must belong to the party body and soul.... Anyone who goes from one party to another is immediately treated as a renegade." In Stirner's view, a monolithic party ceases to be an association and only a corpse remains. He rejected such a party but did not give up hope of joining a political association: "I shall always find enough people who want to associate with me without having to swear allegiance to my flag." He felt he could only rejoin the party if there was "nothing compulsory about it," and his sole condition was that he could be sure "of not letting himself be taken over by the party." "The party is nothing other than a party in which he takes part." "He associates freely and takes back his freedom in the same way."

There is only one weakness in Stirner's argument, though it more or less underlies all his writings: his concept of the unity of the individual is not only "egotistical," profitable for the "Self" but is also valid for the collectivity. The human association is only fruitful if it does not crush the individual but, on the contrary, develops initiative and creative energy. Is not the strength of a party the sum of all the strengths of the individuals who compose it? This lacuna in his argument is due to the fact that Stirner's synthesis of the individual and society remained halting and incomplete. In the thought of this rebel the social and the antisocial clash and are not always resolved. The social anarchists were to reproach him for this, quite rightly.

These reproaches were the more bitter because Stirner, presumably through ignorance, made the mistake of including Proudhon among the authoritarian communists who condemn individualist aspirations in the name of "social duty." It is true that Proudhon had mocked Stirner-like "adoration" of the individual,¹³ but his entire work was a search for a synthesis, or rather an "equilibrium" between concern for the individual and the interests of society, between individual power and collective power. "Just as individualism is a primordial human trait, so association is its complement."

"Some think that man has value only through society... and tend to absorb the individual into the collectivity. Thus... the communist system is a devaluation of the personality in the name of society.... That is tyranny, a mystical and anonymous tyranny, it is not association.... When the human personality is divested of its prerogatives, society is found to be without its vital principle."

On the other hand, Proudhon rejected the individualistic utopianism that agglomerates unrelated individualities with no organic connection, no collective power, and thus betrays its inability to resolve the problem of common interests. In conclusion: neither communism nor unlimited freedom. "We have too many joint interests, too many things in common."

Bakunin, also, was both an individualist and a socialist. He kept reiterating that a society could only reach a higher level by starting from the free individual. Whenever he enunciated rights which must be guaranteed to groups, such as the right to self-determination or secession, he was careful to state that the individual should be the first to benefit from them. The individual owes duties to society only in so far as he has freely consented to become part of it. Everyone is free to associate or not to associate, and, if he so desires, "to go and live in the deserts or the forests among the wild beasts." "Freedom is the absolute right of every human being to seek no other sanction for his actions but his own conscience, to determine these actions solely by his own will, and consequently to owe his first responsibility to himself alone." The society which the individual has freely chosen to join as a member appears only as a secondary factor in the above list of responsibilities. It has more duties to the individual than rights over him, and, provided he has reached his majority, should exercise "neither surveillance nor authority" over him, but owe him "the protection of his liberty."

Bakunin pushed the practice of "absolute and complete liberty" very far: I am entitled to dispose of my person as I please, to be idle or active, to live either honestly by my own labour or even by shamefully exploiting charity or private confidence. All this on one condition only: that this charity or confidence is voluntary and given to me only by individuals who have attained their majority. I even have the right to enter into associations whose objects make them "immoral" or apparently so. In his concern for liberty Bakunin went so far as to allow one to join associations designed to corrupt and destroy individual or public liberty: "Liberty can and must

defend itself only through liberty; to try to restrict it on the specious pretext of defending it is a dangerous contradiction."

As for ethical problems, Bakunin was sure "immorality" was a consequence of a viciously organised society. This latter must, therefore, be destroyed from top to bottom. Liberty alone can bring moral improvement. Restrictions imposed on the pretext of improving morals have always proved detrimental to them. Far from checking the spread of immorality, repression has always extended and deepened it. Thus, it is futile to oppose it by rigorous legislation which trespasses on individual liberty. Bakunin allowed only one sanction against the idle, parasitic, or wicked: the loss of political rights, that is, of the safeguards accorded the individual by society. It follows that each individual has the right to alienate his own freedom by his own acts but, in this case, is denied the enjoyment of his political rights for the duration of his voluntary servitude.

If crimes are committed they must be seen as a disease, and punishment as treatment rather than as social vengeance. Moreover, the convicted individual must retain the right not to submit to the sentence imposed if he declares that he no longer wishes to be a member of the society concerned. The latter, in return, has the right to expel such an individual and declare him to be outside its protection.

Bakunin, however, was far from being a nihilist. His proclamation of absolute individual freedom did not lead him to repudiate all social obligations. I become free only through the freedom of others: "Man can fulfil his free individuality only by complementing it through all the individuals around him, and only through work and the collective force of society." Membership in the society is voluntary but Bakunin had no doubt that because of its enormous advantages "membership will be chosen by all." Man is both "the most individual and the most social of the animals."

Bakunin showed no softness for egoism in its vulgar sense — for bourgeois individualism "which drives the individual to conquest and the establishment of his own well-being... in spite of everyone, on the backs of others, to their detriment." "Such a solitary and abstract human being is as much a fiction as God." "Total isolation is intellectual, moral, and material death."

A broad and synthesizing intellect, Bakunin attempts to create a bridge between individuals and mass movements: "All social life is simply this continual mutual dependence of individuals and the masses. Even the