

COLIN WARD



READER



**PRINCIPLES, PROPOSITIONS &  
DISCUSSIONS  
FOR LAND & FREEDOM**

AN INTRODUCTORY WORD TO THE ‘ANARCHIVE’  
“Anarchy is Order!”

*I must Create a System or be enslav'd by  
another Man's.  
I will not Reason & Compare: my business  
is to Create'*  
(William Blake)

During the 19th century, anarchism has developed as a result of a social current which aims for freedom and happiness. A number of factors since World War I have made this movement, and its ideas, disappear little by little under the dust of history.

After the classical anarchism – of which the Spanish Revolution was one of the last representatives—a ‘new’ kind of resistance was founded in the sixties which claimed to be based (at least partly) on this anarchism. However this resistance is often limited to a few (and even then partly misunderstood) slogans such as ‘Anarchy is order’, ‘Property is theft’,...

Information about anarchism is often hard to come by, monopolised and intellectual; and therefore visibly disappearing. The ‘anarchive’ or ‘anarchist archive’ Anarchy is Order ( in short **A.O**) is an attempt to make the ‘**principles, propositions and discussions**’ of this tradition available again for anyone it concerns. We believe that these texts are part of our own heritage. They don't belong to publishers, institutes or specialists.

These texts thus have to be available for all anarchists and other people interested. That is one of the conditions to give anarchism a new impulse, to let the ‘new anarchism’ outgrow the slogans. This is what makes this project relevant for us: we must find our roots to be able to renew ourselves. We have to learn from the mistakes of our socialist past. History has shown that a large number of the anarchist ideas remain

standing, even during the most recent social-economic developments.

**‘Anarchy Is Order’ does not make profits, everything is spread at the price of printing- and papercosts. This of course creates some limitations for these archives.**

**Everyone is invited to spread along the information we give . This can be done by copying our leaflets, printing texts from the CD (collecting all available texts at a given moment) that is available or copying it, e-mailing the texts to friends and new ones to us,... Become your own anarchiv!!!**

(Be aware though of copyright restrictions. We also want to make sure that the anarchist or non-commercial printers, publishers and autors are not being harmed. Our priority on the other hand remains to spread the ideas, not the ownership of them.)

The anarchiv offers these texts hoping that values like **freedom, solidarity and direct action** get a new meaning and will be lived again; so that the struggle continues against the

*“...demons of flesh and blood, that sway scepters down here;  
and the dirty microbes that send us dark diseases and wish to  
squash us like horseflies;  
and the will- ‘o-the-wisp of the saddest ignorance.”*

(L-P. Boon)

The rest depends as much on you as it depends on us. Don’t mourn, Organise!

Comments, questions, criticism, cooperation can be sent to [A.O@advalvas.be](mailto:A.O@advalvas.be).

A complete list and updates are available on this address, new texts are always

**WELCOME!!**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| An introductory word to the ‘anarchive’.....          | 2   |
| Colin Ward Bibliography .....                         | 6   |
| Open and Closed Families .....                        | 13  |
| The Anarchists Sociology of Federalism.....           | 20  |
| The background .....                                  | 20  |
| Proudhon.....   | 23  |
| Bakunin.....  | 27  |
| Kropotkin.....  | 30  |
| Patrick Geddes .....                                  | 33  |
| Today .....   | 34  |
| Reviewer: Colin Ward .....                            | 39  |
| Albert Camus “Neither Victims nor Executioners” ..... | 39  |
| Fundamentalism.....                                   | 43  |
| Country Life.....                                     | 60  |
| Anarchist Note Book .....                             | 60  |
| Encounters In Grenoble .....                          | 64  |
| Temporary Autonomous Zones .....                      | 70  |
| Healthy Autonomy.....                                 | 74  |
| Slippery Schooling Issues.....                        | 77  |
| Vernon Richards .....                                 | 81  |
| A self employed society.....                          | 85  |
| Anarchy in Milton Keynes.....                         | 107 |
| Society or the State .....                            | 108 |
| Neighbourhood and association.....                    | 110 |
| Milton Keynes and music .....                         | 112 |
| The music subculture.....                             | 114 |
| Change and variety .....                              | 116 |
| Fluidity and movement .....                           | 119 |
| Dissent and co-operation .....                        | 120 |
| Creativity .....                                      | 123 |
| Pluralism and commitment .....                        | 124 |
| The lessons.....                                      | 128 |
| Gardening .....                                       | 130 |

What will anarchism mean tomorrow? ..... 135

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## OPEN AND CLOSED FAMILIES

(originally appeared in the book "Anarchy In Action", 1973, by Colin Ward, pp 74 - 78)

In choosing a partner we try both to retain the relationships we have enjoyed in childhood, and to recoup ourselves for fantasies which have been denied us. Mate-selection accordingly becomes for many an attempt to cast a particular part in a fantasy production of their own, and since both parties have the same intention but rarely quite the same fantasies, the result may well be a duel of rival producers. There are men, as Stanley Spencer said of himself, who need two complementary wives, and women who need two complementary husbands, or at least two complementary love objects. If we insist first that this is immoral or 'unfaithful', and second that should it occur there is an obligation on each love-object to insist on exclusive rights, we merely add unnecessary difficulties to a problem which might have presented none, or at least presented fewer, if anyone were permitted to solve it in their own way. - Alex Comfort, Sex in Society

One essentially anarchist revolution that has advanced enormously in our own day is the sexual revolution. It is anarchist precisely because it involves denying the authority of the regulations laid down by the state and by various religious enterprises over the activities of the individual. And we can claim that it has advanced, not because of the 'breakdown' of the family that moralists (quite erroneously) see all around them, but because in Western society more and more people have decided to conduct their sexual lives as they see best. Those who

have prophesied dreadful consequences as a result of the greater sexual freedom which the young assert - unwanted babies, venereal disease and so on - are usually the very same people who seek the fulfilment of their prophesies by opposing the free availability to the young of contraception and the removal of the stigma and mystification that surround venereal disease.

The official code on sexual matters was bequeathed to the state by the Christian Church, and has been harder and harder to justify with the decline of the beliefs on which it was based. Anarchists, from Emma Goldman to Alex Comfort, have observed the connection between political and sexual repression and, although those who think sexual liberation is necessarily going to lead to political and economic liberation are probably optimistic, it certainly makes people happier. That there is no immutable basis for sexual codes can be seen from the wide varieties in accepted behaviour and in legislation on sexual matters at different periods and in different countries. Male homosexuality became a 'problem' only because it was the subject of legislation. Female homosexuality was no problem because its existence was ignored by (male) legislators. The legal anomalies are sometimes hilarious: 'Who can explain just why anal intercourse is legal in Scotland between male and female, but illegal between male and male? Why is anal intercourse illegal in England between male and female, yet okay between males if both are over 21?'

The more the law is tinkered with in the effort to make it more rational the more absurdities are revealed, Does this mean that there are no rational codes for sexual behaviour? Of course not: they simply get buried in the

irrationalities or devalued through association with irrelevant prohibitions. Alex Comfort, who sees sex as 'the healthiest and most important human sport' suggests that 'the actual content of sexual behaviour probably changes much less between cultures than the individual's capacity to enjoy it without guilt'. He enunciated two moral injunctions or commandments on sexual behaviour: 'Thou shalt not exploit another person's feelings,' and 'Thou shalt under no circumstances cause the birth of an unwanted child.' His reference to 'commandments' led Professor Maurice Carstairs to tease him with the question why, as an anarchist, Comfort was prescribing rules? - to which he replied that a philosophy of freedom demanded higher standards of personal responsibility than a belief in authority. The lack of ordinary prudence and chivalry which could often be observed in adolescent behaviour today was, he suggested, precisely the result of prescribing a code of chastity which did not make sense instead of principles which are 'immediately intelligible and acceptable to any sensible youngster'.

You certainly don't have to be an anarchist to see the modern nuclear family as a straitjacket answer to the functional needs of home-making and child-rearing which imposes intolerable strains on many of the people trapped in it. Edmund Leach remarked that 'far from being the basis of the good society, the family, with its narrow privacy and tawdry secrets, is the source of all our discontents'. David Cooper called it 'the ultimate and most lethal gas chamber in our society', and Jacquetta Hawkes said that 'it is a form making fearful demands on the human beings caught up in it; heavily weighted for loneliness, excessive demands, strain and failure. Obviously it suits some of us as the best working

arrangement but our society makes no provision for the others, whose numbers you can assess by asking yourself the question: 'How many happy families do I know?'

Consider the case of John Citizen. On the strength of a few happy evenings in the discotheque, he and Mary make a contract with the state and/or some religious enterprise to live together for life and are given a licence to copulate. Assuming that they surmount the problems of finding somewhere to live and raise a fitmily, look at them a few years later. He, struggling home from work each day, sees himself caught in a trap. She feels the same, the lonely single-handed housewife, chained to the sink and the nappy-bucket. And the kids too, increasingly as the years go by, fed trapped. Why can't Mum and Dad just leave us alone? There is no need to go on with the sap because you know it all backward.

In terms of the happiness and fulfilment of the individuals involved, the modern family is an improvement on its nineteenth-century predecessor or on the various institutional alternatives dreamed up by authoritarian utopians and we might very well argue that today there is nothing to prevent people from living however they like but, in fact, everything about our society, from the advertisements on television to the laws of inheritance, is based on the assumption of the tight little consumer unit of the nuclear family. Housing is in obvious example: municipal housing makes no provision for non-standard units and in the private sector no loans or mortgages are available for communes.

The rich can avoid the trap by the simple expedient of paying other people to run their households and rear

their children. But for the ordinary family the system makes demands which very many people cannot meet. We accept it because it is universal. Indeed the only examples that Dr Leach could cite where children 'grow up in larger, more relaxed domestic groups centred on the community rather than on mother's kitchen' were the Israeli kibbutz or the Chinese commune, so ubiquitous has the pattern become. But changes are coming: the women's liberation movement is one reminder that the price of the nuclear family is the subjugation of women. The communes or joint households that some young people are setting up are no doubt partly a reflection of the need to share inflated rents but are much more a reaction against what they see as the stultifying rigid nature of the small family unit.

The mystique of biological parenthood results in some couples living in desperate unhappiness because of their infertility while others have children who are neglected and unwanted. It also gives rise to the common situation of parents clinging to their children because they have sunk so much of their emotional capital in them while the children desperately want to get away from their possessive love. 'A secure home', writes John Hartwell, 'often means a stifling atmosphere where human relationships are turned into a parody and where sips of creativity are crushed as evidence of deviancy.' We are very far from the kind of community in which children could choose which of the local parent-figures they would like to attach themselves to but a number of interesting suggestions are in the air, all aiming at loosening family ties in the interests of both parents and children. There is the idea of Paul and Jean Ritter of a neighbourhood 'children's house' serving twenty-five to forty families, there is Paul Goodman's notion of a

Youth House on the analogy of this institution in some 'primitive cultures, and there is Toddy Gold's suggested Multiple Family Housing Unit. These ideas are not based on any rejection of our responsibility towards the young; they involve sharing this responsibility throughout the community and accepting the principle that, as Kropotkin put it, all children are our children. They also imply giving children themselves responsibilities not only for themselves but to the community, which is exactly what our family structure fails to do.

Personal needs and aspirations vary so greatly that it is as fatuous to suggest stereotyped alternatives as it is to recommend universal conformity to the existing pattern. At one end of the scale is the warping of the child by the accident of parenthood, either by possessiveness or by the perpetuation of a family syndrome of inadequacy and incompetence. At the other end is the emotional stultification of the child through a lack of personal attachments in institutional child care. We all know conventional households permeated with casual affection where domestic chores and responsibilities are shared, while we can readily imagine a communal household in which the women were drudges collectively instead of individually and in which a child who was not very attractive or assertive was not so much left alone as neglected. More important than the structure of the family are the expectations that people have of their roles in it. The domestic tyrant of the Victorian family was able to exercise his tyranny only because the others were prepared to put up with it.

There is an old slogan among progressive educators, Have'em, Love'em and Leave'em Alone. This again is

not urging neglect, but it does emphasise that half the personal miseries and frustrations of adolescents and of the adults they become are due to the insidious pressures on the individual to do what other people think is appropriate for him. At the same time the continual extension of the processes of formal education delays even further the granting of real responsibility to the young. Any teacher in further education will tell you of the difference between sixteen-year-olds who are at work and attend part-time vocational courses and those of the same age who are still in full-time education. In those benighted countries where young children are still allowed to work you notice not only the element of exploitation but also the maturity that goes with undertaking functional responsibilities in the real world.

The young are caught in a tender trap: the age of puberty and the age of marriage (since our society does not readily permit experimental alternatives yet) go down while, at the same time, acceptance into the adult world is continually deferred - despite the lowering of the formal age of majority. No wonder many adults appear to be cast in a mould of immaturity. In family life we have not yet developed a genuinely permissive society but simply one in which it is difficult to grow up. On the other hand, the fact that for a minority of young people - a minority which is increasing - the stereotypes of sexual behaviour and sexual roles which confined and oppressed their elders for centuries have simply become irrelevant, will certainly be seen in the future as one of the positive achievements of our age.

# THE ANARCHISTS SOCIOLOGY OF FEDERALISM

FREEDOM 27th June and 11th July 1992  
(<http://vega.soi.city.ac.uk/~louise/freehome.html>)

## THE BACKGROUND

That minority of children in any European country who were given the opportunity of studying the history of Europe as well as that of their own nations, learned that there were two great events in the last century: the unification of Germany, achieved by Bismarck and Emperor Wilhelm I, and the unification of Italy, achieved by Cavour, Mazzini, Garibaldi and Vittorio Emanuele II.

The whole world, which in those days meant the European world, welcomed these triumphs. Germany and Italy had left behind all those little principalities, republics and city states and papal provinces, to become nation states and empires and conquerors. They had become like France, whose little local despots were finally unified by force first by Louis XIV with his majestic slogan 'L'Etat c'est moi', and then by Napoleon, heir to the Grande Revolution, just like Stalin in the twentieth century who build the administrative machinery to ensure that it was true. Or they had become like England, whose kings (and its one republican ruler Oliver Cromwell) had successfully conquered the Welsh, Scots and Irish, and went on to dominate the rest of the world outside Europe. The same thing was happening at the other end of Europe. Ivan IV, correctly named 'The Terrible', conquered central Asia as far as the Pacific, and Peter I, known as 'The Great',

using the techniques he learned in France and Britain, took over the Baltic, most of Poland and the west Ukraine.

Advanced opinion throughout Europe welcomed the fact that Germany and Italy had joined the gentlemen's club of national and imperialist powers. The eventual results in the present century were appalling adventures in conquest, the devastating loss of life among young men from the villages of Europe in the two world wars, and the rise of populist demagogues like Hitler and Mussolini, as well as their imitators, to this day, who claim that 'L'Etat c'est moi'.

Consequently every nation has had a harvest of politicians of every persuasion who have argued for European unity, from every point of view: economic, social, administrative and, of course, political.

Needless to say, in efforts for unification promoted by politicians we have a multitude of administrators in Bruxelles issuing edicts about which varieties of vegetable seeds or what constituents of beefburgers or ice cream may be sold in the shops of the member-nations. The newspapers joyfully report all this trivia. The press gives far less attention to another undercurrent of pan-European opinion, evolving from the views expressed in Strasbourg from people with every kind of opinion on the political spectrum, claiming the existence of a Europe of the Regions, and daring to argue that the Nation State was a phenomenon of the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries, which will not have any useful future in the twenty-first century. The forthcoming history of administration in the federated Europe they are struggling to discover is a link between, let us say,

Calabria, Wales, Andalusia, Aquitaine, Galicia or Saxony, as regions rather than as nations, seeking their regional identity, economically and culturally, which had been lost in their incorporation in nation states, where the centre of gravity is elsewhere.

In the great tide of nationalism in the nineteenth century, there was a handful of prophetic and dissenting voices, urging a different style of federalism. It is interesting, at the least, that the ones whose names survive were the three best known anarchist thinkers of that century: Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Michael Bakunin and Peter Kropotkin. The actual evolution of the political left in the twentieth century has dismissed their legacy as irrelevant. So much the worse for the left, since the road has been emptied in favour of the political right, which has been able to set out its own agenda for both federalism and regionalism. Let us listen, just for a few minutes, to these anarchist precursors.

## PROUDHON

First there was Proudhon, who devoted two of his voluminous works to the idea of federation in opposition to that of the nation state. They were *La Fédération et l'Unité en Italie* of 1862, and in the following year, his book *Du Principe fédératif*.

Proudhon was a citizen of a unified, centralised nation state, with the result that he was obliged to escape to Belgium. And he feared the unification of Italy on several different levels. In his book *De la Justice* of 1858, he claimed that the creation of the German Empire would bring only trouble to the Germans and to the rest of Europe, and he pursued this argument into the politics of Italy.

On the bottom level was history, where natural factors like geology and climate had shaped local customs and attitudes. "Italy" he claimed, "is federal by the constitution of her territory; by the diversity of her inhabitants; in the nature of her genius; in her mores; in her history. She is federal in all her being and has been since all eternity ... And by federation you will make her as many times free as you give her independent states". Now it is not for me to defend the hyperbole of Proudhon's language, but he had other objections. He understood how Cavour and Napoleon III had agreed to turn Italy into a federation of states, but he also understood that, per esempio, the House of Savoy would settle for nothing less than a centralised constitutional monarchy. And beyond this, he profoundly mistrusted the liberal anti-clericalism of Mazzini, not through any love of the Papacy but because he recognised that Mazzini's slogan, 'Dio e popolo', could be exploited by

any demagogue who could seize the machinery of a centralised state. He claimed that the existence of this administrative machinery was an absolute threat to personal and local liberty. Proudhon was almost alone among nineteenth century political theorists to perceive this:

"Liberal today under a liberal government, it will tomorrow become the formidable engine of a usurping despot. It is a perpetual temptation to the executive power, a perpetual threat to the people's liberties. No rights, individual or collective, can be sure of a future. Centralisation might, then, be called the disarming of a nation for the profit of its government ..."

Everything we now know about the twentieth century history of Europe, Asia, Latin America or Africa supports this perception. Nor does the North American style of federalism, so lovingly conceived by Thomas Jefferson, guarantee the removal of this threat. One of Proudhon's English biographers, Edward Hyams, comments that: "It has become apparent since the Second World War that United States Presidents can and do make use of the Federal administrative machine in a way which makes a mockery of democracy". And his Canadian translator paraphrases Proudhon's conclusion thus:

"Solicit men's view in the mass, and they will return stupid, fickle and violent answers; solicit their views as members of definite groups with real solidarity and a distinctive character, and their answers will be responsible and wise. Expose them to the political 'language' of mass democracy, which represents 'the people' as unitary and undivided and minorities as traitors, and they will give birth to tyranny; expose them

to the political language of federalism, in which the people figures as a diversified aggregate of real associations, and they will resist tyranny to the end."

This observation reveals a profound understanding of the psychology of politics. Proudhon was extrapolating from the evolution of the Swiss Confederation, but Europe has other examples in a whole series of specialist fields. The Netherlands has a reputation for its mild or lenient penal policy. The official explanation of this is the replacement in 1886 of the Code Napoleon by "a genuinc Dutch criminal code" based upon cultural traditions like "the well-known Dutch 'tolerance' and tendency to accept deviant minorities". I am quoting the Netherlands criminologist Dr Willem de Haan, who cites the explanation that Dutch society "has traditionally been based upon religious, political and ideological rather than class lines. The important denominational groupings created their own social institutions in all major public spheres. This process ... is responsible for transporting a pragmatic, tolerant general attitude into an absolute social must".

In other words, it is diversity and not unity, which creates the kind of society in which you and I can most comfortably live. And modern Dutch attitudes are rooted in the diversity of the medieval city states of Holland and Zeeland, which explained, as much as Proudhon's regionalism, that a desirable future for all Europe is in accommodation of local differences.

Proudhon listened, in the 1860s, to the talk of a European confederation or a United States of Europe. His comment was that:

"By this they seem to understand nothing but an alliance of all the states which presently exist in Europe, great and small, presided over by a permanent congress. It is taken for granted that each state will retain the form of government that suits it best. Now, since each state will have votes in the congress in proportion to its population and territory, the small states in this so-called confederation will soon be incorporated into the large ones ..."

## BAKUNIN

The second of my nineteenth century mentors, Michael Bakunin, claims our attention for a variety of reasons. He was almost alone among that century's political thinkers in foreseeing the horrors of the clash of modern twentieth century nation-states in the First and Second World Wars, as well as predicting the fate of centralising Marxism in the Russian Empire. In 1867 Prussia and France seemed to be poised for a war about which empire should control Luxemburg and this, through the network of interests and alliances, "threatened to engulf all Europe". A League for Peace and Freedom held its congress in Geneva, sponsored by prominent people from various countries like Giuseppe Garibaldi, Victor Hugo and John Stuart Mill. Bakunin seized the opportunity to address this audience, and published his opinions under the title *Federalisme, Socialisme et Anti-Theologisme*. This document set out thirteen points on which, according to Bakunin, the Geneva Congress was unanimous.

The first of these proclaimed: "That in order to achieve the triumph of liberty, justice and peace in the international relations of Europe, and to render civil war impossible among the various peoples which make up the European family, only a single course lies open: to constitute the United States of Europe". His second point argued that this aim implied that states must be replaced by regions, for it observed: "That the formation of these States of Europe can never come about between the States as constituted at present, in view of the monstrous disparity which exists between their various powers." His fourth point claimed: "That not even if it called itself a republic could an centralised bureaucratic

and by the same token militarist States enter seriously and genuinely into an international federation. By virtue of its constitution, which will always be an explicit or implicit denial of domestic liberty, it would necessarily imply a declaration of permanent war and a threat to the existence of neighbouring countries". Consequently his fifth point demanded: "That all the supporters of the League should therefore bend all their energies towards the reconstruction of their various countries in order to replace the old organisation founded throughout upon violence and the principle of authority by a new organisation based solely upon the interests needs and inclinations of the populace, and owning no principle other than that of the free federation of individuals into communes communes into provinces, provinces into nations, and the latter into the United States, first of Europe, then of the whole world.

The vision thus became bigger and bigger, but Bakunin was careful to include the acceptance of secession. His eighth point declared that: "Just because a region has formed part of a State, even by voluntary accession, it by no means follows that it incurs any obligation to remain tied to it forever. No obligation in perpetuity is acceptable to human justice ... The right of free union and equally free secession comes first and foremost among all political rights; without it, confederation would be nothing but centralisation in disguise.

Bakunin refers admiringly to the Swiss Confederation "practising federation so successfully today", as he puts it and Proudhon, too, explicitly took as a model the Swiss supremacy of the commune as the unit of social organisation, linked by the canton, with a purely administrative federal council. But both remembered the

events of 1848, when the Sonderbund of secessionist cantons were compelled by war to accept the new constitution of the majority. So Proudhon and Bakunin were agreed in condemning the subversion of federalism by the unitary principle. In other words, there must be a right of secession.

## KROPOTKIN

Switzerland, precisely because of its decentralised constitution, was a refuge for endless political refugees from the Austro-Hungarian, German and Russian empires. One Russian anarchist was even expelled from Switzerland. He was too much, even for the Swiss Federal Council. He was Peter Kropotkin, who connects nineteenth century federalism with twentieth century regional geography.

His youth was spent as an army officer in geological expeditions in the Far Eastern provinces of the Russian Empire, and his autobiography tells of the outrage he felt at seeing how central administration and funding destroyed any improvement of local conditions, through ignorance, incompetence and universal corruption, and through the destruction of ancient communal institutions which might have enabled people to change their own lives. The rich got richer, the poor got poorer, and the administrative machinery was suffocated by boredom and embezzlement.

There is a similar literature from any empire or nation-state: the British Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and you can read identical conclusions in the writings of Carlo Levi or Danilo Dolci. In 1872, Kropotkin made his first visit to Western Europe and in Switzerland was intoxicated by the air of a democracy, even a bourgeois one. In the Jura hills he stayed with the watch-case makers. His biographer Martin Miller explains how this was the turning point in his life:

"Kropotkin's meetings and talks with the workers on their jobs revealed the kind of spontaneous freedom without authority or direction from above that he had

dreamed about. Isolated and self-sufficient, the Jura watchmakers impressed Kropotkin as an example that could transform society if such a community were allowed to develop on a large scale. There was no doubt in his mind that this community would work because it was not a matter of imposing an artificial 'system' such as Muraviev had attempted in Siberia but of permitting the natural activity of the workers to function according to their own interests."

It was the turning point of his life. The rest of his life was, in a sense, devoted to gathering the evidence for anarchism, federalism and regionalism.

It would be a mistake to think that the approach he developed is simply a matter of academic history. To prove this, I need only refer you to the study that Camillo Berneri published in 1922 on 'Un federaliste Russo, Pietro Kropotkine'. Berneri quotes the 'Letter to the Workers of Western Europe' that Kropotkin handed to the British Labour Party politician Margaret Bondfield in June 1920. In the course of it he declared: "Imperial Russia is dead and will never be revived. The future of the various provinces which composed the Empire will be directed towards a large federation. The natural territories of the different sections of this federation are in no way distinct from those with which we are familiar in the history of Russia, of its ethnography and economic life. All the attempts to bring together the constituent parts of the Russian Empire, such as Finland, the Baltic provinces, Lithuania, Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, Siberia and others' under a central authority are doomed to certain failure. The future of what was the Russian Empire is directed towards a federalism of independent units."

You and I today can see the relevance of this opinion, even though it was ignored as totally irrelevant for seventy years. As an exile in Western Europe, he had instant contact with a range of pioneers of regional thinking. The relationship between regionalism and anarchism has been handsomely, even extravagantly, delineated by Peter Hall, the geographer who is director of the Institute of Urban and Regional Development at Berkeley, California, in his book *Cities of Tomorrow* (1988). There was Kropotkin's fellow-anarchist geographer, Elisee Reclus, arguing for small-scale human societies based on the ecology of their regions. There was Paul Vidal de la Blache, another founder of French geography, who argued that "the region was more than an object of survey; it was to provide the basis for the total reconstruction of social and political life." For Vidal, as Professor Hall explains, the region, not the nation, which "as the motor force of human development: the almost sensual reciprocity between men and women and their surroundings, was the seat of comprehensible liberty and the mainspring of cultural evolution, which were being attacked and eroded by the centralised nation-state and by large-scale machine industry."

## PATRICK GEDDES

Finally there was the extraordinary Scottish biologist Patrick Geddes, who tried to encapsulate all these regionalist ideas, whether geographical, social, historical, political or economic, into an ideology of reasons for regions, known to most of us through the work of his disciple Lewis Mumford. Professor Hall argued that:

"Many, though by no means all, of the early visions of the planning movement stemmed from the anarchist movement, which flourished in the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first years of the twentieth ... The vision of these anarchist pioneers was not merely of an alternative built form, but of an alternative society, neither capitalist nor bureaucratic-socialistic: a society based on voluntary co-operation among men and women, working and living in small self-governing communities."

## TODAY

Now in the last years of the twentieth century, I share this vision. Those nineteenth century anarchist thinkers were a century in advance of their contemporaries in warning the peoples of Europe of the consequences of not adopting a regionalist and federalist approach. Among survivors of every kind of disastrous experience in the twentieth century the rulers of the nation states of Europe have directed policy towards several types of supranational existence. The crucial issue that faces them is the question of whether to conceive of a Europe of States or a Europe of Regions.

Proudhon, 130 years ago, related the issue to the idea of a European balance of power, the aim of statesmen and politician theorists, and argued that this was "impossible to realise among great powers with unitary constitutions". He had argued in *La Federation et l'Unite' en Italie* that "the first step towards the reform of public law in Europe" was "the restoration of the confederations of Italy, Greece, the Netherlands, Scandinavia and the Danube, as a prelude to the decentralisation of the large states and hence to general disarmament". And in *Du Principe Federatif* he noted that "Among French democrats there has been much talk of, European confederation, or a United States of Europe. By this they seem to understand nothing but an alliance of all the states which presently exist in Europe, great and small, presided over by a permanent congress." He claimed that such a federation would either be a trap or would have no meaning, for the obvious reason that the big states would dominate the small ones.

A century later, the economist Leopold Kohr (Austrian by birth, British by nationality, Welsh by choice), who also describes himself as an anarchist, published his book *The Breakdown of Nations*, glorifying the virtues of small-scale societies and arguing, once again, that Europe's problems arise from the existence of the nation state. Praising, once again, the Swiss Confederation, he claimed, with the use of maps, that "Europe's problem - as that of any federation - is one of division, not of union."

Now to do them justice, the advocates of a United Europe have developed a doctrine of 'subsidiarity', arguing that governmental decisions should not be taken by the supra-nation institutions of the European Community, but preferably by regional or local levels of administration, rather than by national governments. This particular principle has been adopted by the Council of Europe, calling for national governments to adopt its Charter for Local Self-Government "to formalise commitment to the principle that government functions should be carried out at the lowest level possible and only transferred to higher government by consent."

This principle is an extraordinary tribute to Proudhon, Bakunin and Kropotkin, and the opinions which they were alone in voicing (apart from some absorbing Spanish thinkers like Pi y Margall or Joaquin Costa), but of course it is one of the first aspects of pan-European ideology which national governments will choose to ignore. There are obvious differences between various nation states in this respect. In many of them - for example Germany, Italy, Spain and even France - the machinery of government is infinitely more devolved

than it was fifty years ago. The same may soon be true of the Soviet Union. This devolution may not have proceeded at the pace that you or I would want, and I will happily agree that the founders of the European Community have succeeded in their original aim of ending old national antagonisms and have made future wars in Western Europe inconceivable. But we are still very far from a Europe of the Regions.

I live in what is now the most centralised state in Western Europe, and the dominance of central government there has immeasurably increased, not diminished, during the last ten years. Some people here will remember the rhetoric of the then British Prime Minister in 1988:

"We have not successfully rolled back the frontiers of the State in Britain, only to see them reimposed at a European level, with a European super-state exercising a new dominance from Brussels".

This is the language of delusion. It does not relate to reality. And you do not have to be a supporter of the European Commission to perceive this. But it does illustrate how far some of us are from conceiving the truth of Proudhon's comment that: "Even Europe would be too large to form a single confederation; it could form only a confederation of confederations."

The anarchist warning is precisely that the obstacle to a Europe of the Regions is the nation state. If you and I have any influence on political thinking in the next century, we should be promoting the reasons for regions. "Think globally - act locally " is one of the useful slogans of the international Green movement. The nation state occupied a small segment of European

history. We have to free ourselves from national ideologies in order to act locally and think regionally. Both will enable us to become citizens of the whole world, not of nations nor of trans-national super-states.

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**REVIEWER: COLIN WARD**  
**ALBERT CAMUS “NEITHER VICTIMS**  
**NOR EXECUTIONERS”**

Social Anarchism 19 (1994)

("http://www.nothingness.org/sociala/"\t "\_top")

I am obliged to begin with an apology. In 1987 I volunteered to Chris Stadler to review this book. Consequently in 1988 the publishers sent me a copy. The rest is, more or less, silence, apart from a few mumbled regrets to Chris. Some explanation is needed.

Camus was a French Algerian born in 1913. His father was killed in the First World War, his mother was an illiterate Spanish immigrant and his childhood was spent in sunshine and poverty. He won a scholarship to the lycée in Algiers but fell ill with tuberculosis, the illness that plagued him all through life until his death in a car accident in 1960. In 1937 he joined the Communist Party but was expelled for his support for the Algerian Arabs. In 1939 he edited an Algerian newspaper which was first censored and then banned, and he was obliged to leave for France. His books *The Stranger* and *The Myth of Sisyphus* appeared in 1942. In 1944 he became the editor of *Combat*, the underground paper of a resistance group, which after the liberation became an important left-wing journal.

His series of articles *Neither Victims nor Executioners* appeared there in November 1946. I remember being thrilled by it when that remarkable journalist Dwight Macdonald published it in his magazine *Politics* in the July August 1947 issue. The essay was a repudiation of

the emerging Cold War and a refusal to take sides. It alienated Camus both from the supporters of the American side, and those, like Sartre, who had concluded that it was OK to ignore Stalin's slave state since, in a metaphysical way, the world's Communist parties represented the future.

But to my dismay, when I re-read the pamphlet in 1988, I found the language both dated and opaque. I remembered the comment on Camus by another of his American friends, A. J. Liebling of *The New Yorker*, "His energies were dissipated in creative writing and we lost a great journalist." So I concluded that if I couldn't wholeheartedly praise that little book, I ought to remain silent.

But something needs to be said about its author. Camus went on to write his most celebrated book *The Plague* in 1947 and his most anarchic book *The Rebel* in 1951. There he claimed that all modern revolutions have simply enlarged the power of the state, and he moved on to his last gloomy novel *The Fall* in 1956. In the 1950s he was drawn ever closer to the struggling journals of the anarchists. His biographer Herbert Lottman comments on his association with Pierre Monatte, who published *Révolution Proletarienne*, with Giovanna Berneri of *Volontà*, Jean Paul Samson who published *Témoins*, Maurice Joyeux of *Le Libertaire* and *Le Monde Libertaire*, and with the Spanish exiles who produced *Solidaridad Obrera* until, as Lottman explains, "the paper was eventually banned by the de Gaulle government to avoid giving offence to General Franco." In his political isolation he had recourse to "the men and women of political movements with which he could still

sympathize, those of the far-out left, who on their own chosen terrain were often as lonely as he was." (1)

One of his closest friends for many years was Nicola Chiaromonte, who until his death in 1972 was a frequent contributor to the left wing press in America. Camus once explained his political attitudes to Chiaromonte in these terms:

I have been called a sentimentalist. It's true. I was a journalist because, when I got up in the morning and read the paper, there were pieces of news in it that made me mad. I wanted to express my anger as clearly as possible, but I was unable to do much more than that. I certainly didn't have a theory, much less a comprehensive ideology. I didn't want to go beyond the limits of what I was sure of. Hence, I was considered unconstructive, irresolute, and a paltry moderate. Still, I don't think I am ready to compromise on the matters that make me mad: nationalism, colonialism, social injustice, and the absurdity of the modern State.

Perhaps it was the very exploratory nature of his approach that gave me an initial disappointment on re-reading his pamphlet. Even his editors in their introduction register a certain surprise that Camus seemed to have known little about others who had renounced violence, neither of the French pacifist tradition nor of world figures like Gandhi. I'll read it again with a more open mind.

Neither Victims nor Executioners by Albert Camus. Introduced by R. Scott Kennedy and Peter Klotz-Chamberlin. 64 pp. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1986. \$16.95 hardback, \$5.95 paperback.

Footnotes

(1) Herbert Lotman, *Albert Camus : A Biography*. Paperback ed. Gingko Press, 1997 (repr.). ISBN 3927258067

## FUNDAMENTALISM

The Raven, No. 27 (Autumn 1994)

Talk at the Conway Hall, London, on Saturday 22nd October 1994, 2pm.

When I was asked by the Anarchist Research Group to talk here today, I resolved to tackle a difficult subject which we tend to ignore because it doesn't fit our view of the world but which is going to affect us all, anarchists and non-anarchists, increasingly: the rise at the end of the twentieth century of religious fundamentalism.

Among the classical anarchists, the characteristic statement on religion came from the most widely-circulated work of the Russian anarchist Michael Bakunin, *God and the State*. It is a fragment, written in 1871, in which he deplors the fact that belief in God still survived among the people, especially, as he put it, 'in the rural districts, where it is more widespread than among the proletariat of the cities'.

He thought this faith in religion was all too natural, since all governments profited from the ignorance of the people as one of the essential conditions of their own power, while weighed down by labour, deprived of leisure and of intellectual intercourse, the people sought an escape. Bakunin claimed that there were three methods of escape from the miseries of life, two of them illusory and one real. The first two were the bottle and the church, 'debauchery of the body or debauchery of the mind; the third is social revolution'.

Social revolution, Bakunin believed, 'will be much more potent than all the theological propagandism of the freethinkers to destroy to their last vestige the religious

beliefs and dissolute habits of the people, beliefs and habits much more intimately connected than is generally supposed'.

Bakunin then turned to the powerful, dominant classes in society who, while too worldly-wise to be believers themselves, 'must at least make a semblance of believing' because the simple faith of the people was a useful factor in keeping them down.

Finally, in this particular statement of his attitudes, Bakunin turns to those propagandists for religion who, when you challenge them on any particular absurdity in their dogma relating to miracles, virgin births or resurrection, loftily explain that they are to be understood as beautiful myths rather than literal truths and that we are to be pitied for our prosaic questions rather than them for propagating mythology as truth.

Bakunin's opinions were much the same as those of his adversary Karl Marx, one of whose best-known phrases was his description of religion as the opium of the people. And the historians of ideas would categorise liberalism, socialism, communism and anarchism as products of the period known as the Enlightenment, the result of the Age of Reason, the ferment of ideas and the spirit of enquiry between the English Revolution of the 1640s and the American and French revolutions of the 1770s and 1780s.

In parochial English terms, one slow, grudgingly-conceded result of the Enlightenment was religious toleration. We tend to forget that England has a state church, founded because of a row that Henry VIII had with the Pope over one of his divorces. It claimed its

martyrs as the long history of suppression of dissenters reminds us, as does the continual struggle for religious freedom. It wasn't until 1858 that legal disabilities were lifted from believing Jews and not until 1871 that people who could not subscribe to the 39 Articles of the Church of England were admitted to the ancient universities. The Church of England may be a joke to us and the majority of British people, but it is a reminder of an important social and political fact. One result of the Enlightenment was that the people who wrote the constitutions of a great many states sought to learn the lessons of history and the horrors of religious wars, and insisted on the absolute separation of religious practices from public life. Religion was to be a private affair. This was true of the founding fathers of the United States of America, whose ancestors had fled religious persecution in Europe, it was true of the French republic and consequently of those countries which with immense loss of life liberated themselves from French imperialism. And it is true of many new republics similarly founded as a result of the collapse of imperialism in the twentieth century. Some key examples are the republics of India, Turkey, Egypt, Algeria or Israel.

Now, all over the world, the secular state is under threat. Secular political regimes in, for example, Turkey, Egypt, Israel or Algeria, are threatened by militant religious movements, and there is a growing fundamentalist threat to the secular constitution of the United States. This isn't what Bakunin or Marx or any other political thinker from the nineteenth century, from John Stuart Mill to Alexis de Tocqueville, predicted.

I am like the rest of them, but I don't have a speculative turn of mind and never ponder over the big philosophical

issues that worry some people, like the nature and purpose of human existence. What interest me are the issues that bind us together, like the need for housing, food and the production of goods and services, rather than those that set us apart, like nationalism, tribalism and religion, which seem to depend on geographical accidents and aesthetic choices. Just as there is no point in arguing over the relative merits of Mozart, rock or flamenco, there is nothing to be gained from disputes about the great variety of religions on offer. It is more sensible to stress, in terms of getting on with the art of living together, the principle which many of them have in common and with most of us non-religious people. This is the principle of reciprocity, or 'do as you would be done by', described by Kropotkin as Mutual Aid.

So it never seemed important to me to be involved in anti-religious activities, dismissed by Bakunin as 'the theological propagandism of the freethinkers', and it has always seemed to me to be pointless to solemnly set out arguments intended to prove that God does not exist. I took it for granted that the increasing secularisation of life, reflected in Europe at least by declining attendances in places of worship, would make religion an issue we didn't have to bother about. 'Live and let live' is my attitude, and I would never dream of troubling people who didn't trouble me.

I live in a country which is not a secular state, and which actually has a state church, attended by a small minority of the population, and actually has a law of blasphemy. Everyone thought this law was a dead letter, but it was actually invoked a few years ago in a private prosecution by Mrs Mary Whitehouse of the journal *Gay News*, its editor and distributors because of their publication of a

poem by James Kirkup. The revelation that we still had such a law led to a demand that, simply out of fairness, it should be extended to cover other religious faiths beyond Christianity and the Church of England. This demand for a new non-discriminatory blasphemy law was supported not only by representatives of that church but by those who claimed to represent Catholics, Jews and Muslims, and could happen, just for lack of political opposition. It was left to Nicolas Walter, in his book on Blasphemy, Ancient and Modern, to remind us that such a law 'would still discriminate between religion and other forms of belief' and would 'dramatically increase the power of fanatics to impose their views on the majority and to have them protected from criticism'.

Plenty of anarchists may think that a more immediate diminution of civil liberties will result from the present government's Criminal Justice Bill, about to become law. This is a calculated attempt to criminalise a wide spread of dissidents including traditional gypsies, travellers, squatters, protesters and demonstrators of every kind. A legislature which can approve so appalling a threat to every kind of non-parliamentary opposition will not hesitate to approve the protection from criticism of religious beliefs of the major kinds.

What makes this a disastrous prospect is that, in our media-managed world where news-worthiness displaces human values, it is always the extreme expression of views that dominates the media. We never hear about the views of those millions of fellow citizens who would feel outraged by anti-religious propaganda but have made their adjustments to secular society. They make a token observance of ancient beliefs, out of respect for their ancestors, for births, marriages and deaths or festive

occasions, and fill up the statistics of believers. But they don't make news and, as a result of the media, it is taken for granted that the spokesman for the non-Catholic majority in Northern Ireland is the Reverend Ian Paisley, or that the spokesman for the majority in Israel, a nation-state founded by socialist atheists, was the late Rabbi Meir Kahana, a New Yorker, or the spokesman for the Muslim world was the late Ayatollah Khomeini, or for that matter that the Catholic world shares the opinions of the current Pope. Daily experience confirms that this is not so.

The unexpected and unwelcome change in the religious atmosphere is known as fundamentalism, and arose from a trend in Christian revivalism in the United States after the First World War which insisted on belief in the literal truth of everything in the Bible. The use of the term has spread to describe trends in the Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and Shinto religions which, to outsiders like us, present similar features. They present a threat, not only to the hard-won concept of the secular state, which anarchists may not feel important, but to the hard-won freedoms of every citizen. Writing in Freedom recently, Nicolas Walter urged us to take this threat seriously, pointing out that: Fundamentalist Christians are trying to suppress the study of evolution and the practice of contraception and abortion in the West and the Third World. Fundamentalist Jews are trying to incorporate the whole of Palestine into Israel and to impose the halachah, the traditional law of Judaism. Fundamentalist Muslims are trying to establish Muslim regimes in all countries with Muslim populations (including Britain) and to impose the shaa, the traditional law of Islam. And fundamentalists of all faiths are using assassination and

terror all over the world to suppress freedom of discussion of such matters.

This is an absolute tragedy for that majority of citizens in any country who are simply concerned with the ordinary business of living, feeding a family and enjoying the ordinary pleasures of life, as well as for those who aspire to make life better through community action and social justice. Governmental suppression of religion never works. The Soviet Union witnessed seventy years of state hostility, sometimes violent and sometimes benign, to religious activity. When the regime collapsed, there was a huge revival of the Orthodox faith and a happy hunting ground for American Protestant evangelism

. In Soviet Central Asia, one historian suggests that 'the local elites, attached to Islamic customs and recognising a degree of affinity between Islamic and socialist values, cheated on their anti-religious activities as assiduously as they faked their cotton-production figures. Gatherings of old men reading the Koran would be described to zealots of the Society for Scientific Atheism as meetings of Great Patriotic War veterans'. In Turkey, Kemal Ataturk, who also shared Bakunin's views on religion, embarked on a dictatorial policy of what we might call 'de-Islamification'.

His current successors are prevented from presenting a democratic facade, precisely because of the threat of the return of religion. On a different time-scale, Iran, where the Shah was a ruthless Westerniser, was succeeded by a regime which no one predicted. Egypt and Algeria are torn apart between rival elites of the secular or religious state. In the United States the most powerful of all

political lobbies is that of the Christian Coalition with a growing influence in the Republican Party. It denies any responsibility for the murder of the last doctor who dared to perform an abortion in the American South.

It is both tragic and unexpected that among all the other issues facing us, we, who thought that wars of religion belonged to the past, have to confront issues of the recognition of difference while we move on to the issues which unite, rather than divide us. My own approach is that of the anarchist propagandist Rudolf Rocker, ninety years ago in the Jewish community of Whitechapel. Some secularist allies had chosen the propaganda of provocative behaviour on Sabbath mornings outside the synagogue in Brick Lane. Asked his opinion, Rocker replied that the place for believers was the house of worship, and the place for non-believers was the radical meeting. The anecdote has resonances. For the same building that has seen many faiths come and go, as a Huguenot church, a dissenting meeting-house and a Jewish synagogue, is now a mosque. And anyone harassing the emerging worshippers today is not a secularist Bangladeshi but an English racist, menacing and heavy, and bent on instilling fear and making trouble. The scene has changed.

It has changed for me too. On the rare occasions when I have thought about this issue I have agreed with the view expressed about, for example, the BJP Party in India who succeeded in spreading communal violence into parts of the Punjab where different communities had previously lived in harmony together, that the name of the disease is not fundamentalism but ethnic nationalism. This view fits other parts of the world like Northern Ireland. And in such instances, as in many parts of the Islamic world, we

can choose to put the blame on the endless humiliations and devaluations of the local culture inflicted by Western imperialism. Edward Said, for example, claims that:

The fear and terror induced by the overscale images of 'terrorism' and 'fundamentalism' - call them the figures of an international or transnational imagery made up of foreign devils - hastens the individual's subordination to the dominant norms of the moment. This is as true in the new post-colonial societies as it is in the West generally and the United States particularly. Thus to oppose the abnormality and extremism embedded in terrorism and fundamentalism - my example has only a small degree of parody - is also to uphold the moderation, rationality, executive centrality of a vaguely designated 'Western' (or otherwise local and patriotically assumed) ethos. The irony is that far from endowing the Western ethos with the confidence and secure 'normality' we associate with privilege and rectitude, this dynamic imbues 'us' with a righteous anger and defensiveness in which 'others' are finally seen as enemies, bent on destroying our civilisation and way of life.

To my mind, Said's difficult prose envelopes a big truth. The countries of the Near and Middle East were for centuries subjected to one imperialism or another, their culture ridiculed and patronised and even their boundaries formed by lines drawn on the map by European government and business. They are valued today according to their oil resources or as potential markets, while they are awash with weapons left over from Cold War bribes. The Western secular religion of conspicuous consumption was readily adopted by Eastern rulers, but could offer nothing but frustrated hopes to their poor subjects.

But although Islamic fundamentalism is the version that makes news, other varieties with quite different backgrounds are observable in the West. The best source for the ordinary reader (as opposed to scholars with access to an academic industry called The Fundamentalism Project, with its series of books from the University of Chicago Press) is a book by a French author, Gilles Kepel, with the apt title *The Revenge of God*.

He studies the phenomenon in terms of the three major religions known as 'Abrahamic', Judaism, Christianity and Islam, though he might have extended his study, not only to other old religions but to various new ones. I would have extended it to cover the worldwide trend over the same period to Marketism, the worship of the Market, of which the Thatcherism of the 1980s in Britain is just one reflection, permeating every aspect of our lives. The least observant of us must have noted how, as if by magic, even our language has changed, so that the user of public transport once described as a 'passenger' is now a 'customer' and that what was once 'health care' is now a 'product'. There is a theology at work here, and its universal acceptance is part of our enquiry into fundamentalism.

Kepel's aim is something different. His task is to persuade us that the scene has changed since the days when elderly rationalist anarchists like me formed our view of the world.

He argues that 'The 1970s was a decade of cardinal importance for the relationship between religion and politics, which has changed in unexpected ways during

the last quarter of the twentieth century' and that around 1975 the whole process of secularisation went into reverse as 'a new religious approach took shape, aiming no longer at adapting to secular values but at last recovering a sacred foundation for the organisation of society - by changing society if necessary'.

These movements, he explains, 'had come into being earlier, but none had attracted a large audience until that time. They had not drawn the masses after them, and their ideals or slogans appeared outdated or retrograde at a time of widespread social optimism. In the postwar period, earthly utopias had triumphed: in Europe, which had emerged from the nightmare of war and destruction and had discovered the horror of the extermination of the Jews, all energies were turned to building new societies that would exorcise the morbid phantasms of the past. The building of socialism in the East and the birth of the consumer society in the West left little room for the expression of ideologies seeking to draw upon religion for the guidelines of the social order. The improved standard of living resulting from the considerable advances in technology fostered an uncritical belief in progress, so much that "progressiveness" itself became a criterion of value'.

And to remind us that we cannot simply explain the rejection of secular values on the traumas of the post-colonial world, he draws our attention to political realities in America.

'We may recall', he reminds us, 'that in 1976 the fervent Baptist Jimmy Carter was elected President of the United States, and deployed his moral and religious convictions in cleansing the American executive of the sin of Watergate. In 1980 his rival, Ronald Reagan, was elected

largely because he captured the votes of most of the Evangelical and fundamentalist electors who followed the advice of politico-religious bodies such as the Moral Majority. Created in 1979, this movement aimed at making America ... into a new Jerusalem. There too, the religious movements of the 1970s touched all levels of society; they were not confined to the rural, conservative southern states, but attracted members both from the black and Hispanic minorities and from the white Anglo-Saxon Protestants, and developed a huge preaching and financing network thanks to their exceptional mastery of television and the most sophisticated forms of communication. Under Jimmy Carter, and above all Ronald Reagan, some of them had easy access to the White House and the highest political circles; they used it to promote their vision of a society founded on the observance of "Christian values" - from school prayers to the prohibition of abortion'.

Kepel was writing in 1991, and since then what is now called the Christian Coalition now dominates the Republican Party in the United States and this summer all the Republican senators have signed a letter to the Democratic president Clinton demanding that he should 'repudiate' the attack on the religious Right as 'bigotry'. He knows that his party too depends upon the organised Christian vote and will have to employ all the skills of his media advisors to learn how best to accede to this demand. The point to note is that anyone who wants to protect the secular state from religious propagandists is a bigot, while those who you or I would regard as bigots claim the protection of the state in imposing their attitudes on the rest of us.

The secular state of consumerism and the religion of economic growth and free trade will always come to terms with the fundamentalists of a variety of other religions if they provide markets for military equipment, but somehow this kind of economic fundamentalism is not considered as an irrational ideology but as a law of nature. But in terms of the discussion of those ideologies normally classified as religions, anarchists, with their all-embracing criticism of authority whether that of the state or of capitalism, have been by-passed by the resurgence of religious belief.

Since we know that traditional anti-religious propaganda fails to change people's minds and since we know that enforced attempts to suppress beliefs simply encourage them to spring up again the moment the pressure is relaxed, we (or rather our successors in the next century) have to explore other routes, and we have few ideas about what they are.

One is the obdurate defence of civil liberties and of freedom of expression. Supporters of Amnesty and readers of the journal *Index on Censorship* will know that all over the world this claims its martyrs every day, not only among those bold enough to speak out but among those caught in the crossfire. In fact, of course, every newspaper reader knows this too. But since the media need a new horror to report every day, even our familiarity with the disasters of religious or ethnic nationalism or tribalism tends to obscure the fact that most people have a huge vested interest in simply keeping society going, and don't share the lethal preoccupations of the zealots. In the background of the shocking images on television are the municipal employees dedicated to ordinary public services like the

water and power supplies, the fire brigade, ambulance and hospital provision, cleaning up the mess that the ideologists and true believers leave behind. They hadn't heard the news from the market religion of the enlightened West that these things are simply commodities.

This leads me to another approach to the religious revival, which I will call accommodation. No doubt you, like me, have met believers in some religion or other with whom we have one attitude in common, which is of disgust at the world of advertising and public relations that surrounds us, concerned solely with ensnaring us all into consuming more. It might be that rejection of the way in which the culture of contentment of the consuming classes of the rich nations are squandering the world's resources, an issue that links anarchists with the Green movement, also joins people like us to one element in various religious movements. It isn't a matter of puritanical anti-materialism. We all want a society where people are adequately fed, clothed and housed, and plenty of us felt disinclined to conduct theoretical arguments with members of that movement known as Liberation Theology in Latin America or with other believers in other faiths who were impelled to tackle issues that their rulers neglected.

Let me illustrate this from my experience. While uninterested in God, I am interested in housing, so I get asked to present what I see as an anarchist point of view at conferences where the well-housed discuss the problems of the ill-housed. At one of these I found an ally in a woman with vast experience of self-help housing by poor people. She wore the hijab or veil and I learned later that this was why she was forbidden to

teach about housing at the University of Ankara. There are, of course, neighbouring countries where she would be forbidden to teach unless she was veiled.

This encounter leads me to a further speculation. Perhaps the most effective counter to fundamentalist threats to the liberty of all will be the women's movement. Women are certainly its first victims. In Algeria, schoolgirls were killed in the street for not wearing the veil and in March this year two girls wearing the veil were shot outside their school. Aicha Lemsine comments in the current issue of *Index on Censorship*.

It was the first time that girls wearing Islamic dress had been killed. Suddenly it was not only women journalists and writers - 'modern' women - who were being targeted; simply to be a woman was enough. Caught between the 'democratic fundamentalists' and the 'religious fundamentalists', regardless of age, Algerian women became a human shield, the animal brought to slaughter, marked down for the final solution by madmen.

It is evident that the Bible Belt of the United States has vast numbers of women who couldn't wait to escape. And the same must be true of the new more-orthodox-than-ever-before Jewish households in that country or in Britain or in Israel. One of the reasons why there has been such a widespread recent interest in Emma Goldman and her views is because she was an exemplar of women's emancipation from the culture of the shtetl, which male theologians have sought to reproduce in New York, London and Jerusalem. The implications of this and its equivalents in other religious traditions, Hinduism and Islam, are spelled out in an absorbing

book on women and fundamentalism in Britain called Reusing Holy Orders.

Another aspect of the same theme comes from the Moroccan scholar Fatima Mernissi who made a study of Women and Islam, when she was asked to write a preface for an English translation of her book. She concluded:

When I finished writing this book I had come to understand one thing: if women's rights are a problem for some modern Muslim men, it is neither because of the Koran nor the Prophet, nor the Islamic tradition, but simply because those rights conflict with the interests of a male elite. The elite faction is trying to convince us that their egotistically subjective and mediocre view of culture and society has a sacred basis.

You will know that for expressing similar views a Bangladeshi doctor and writer, Taslima Nasreen, author of a novel Shame about the persecution of the Hindu minority in Bangladesh, has been obliged to flee her country and take refuge in Sweden. She was reported as saying that 'It is my belief that politics cannot be based on religion if our women are to be free', and on 4th June this year 'the Bangladeshi government issued an arrest warrant under Article 295a of the Penal Code; the relevant legal clauses refer to "deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings" ... It is ironic that the law under which Taslima Nasreen was charged was originally a British law introduced in colonial times to prevent inter-religious strife'. It is evident that she was allowed to slip out of the country to avoid a confrontation between the secular government and the fundamentalist lobby. Unlike Fatima Mernissi, who

writes from within the Islamic tradition, Taslima Nasreen says:

I dream of a world without religion. Religion gives birth to fundamentalism as surely as the seed gives birth to the tree. We can tear the tree down, but if the seed remains it will produce another tree. While the seed remains, we cannot root out fundamentalism.

These two brave women have quite different views on fundamentalism. I think that the evidence of twentieth century history is that religious impulses can't be rooted out. The power of the state can be used to subdue them but they keep springing up. It is going to be a battle in the next century just to insist that they are a private matter, and that the zealots are prevented by the secular majority in society from imposing their preferences and prejudices on the rest of us, destroying civil society in the process.

This is a muted conclusion, which I reach through watching what is actually happening in the world. I should add that at 3pm tomorrow afternoon in the library in this building, you can hear Nicolas Walter talking, far more analytically than I could, on 'Fundamentals of Fundamentalism'.

## COUNTRY LIFE ANARCHIST NOTE BOOK

Britain, with its heavily-subsidised agriculture, has fewer land workers per head of population than any other European country. It has fewer even than Hong Kong.

Plenty of us have sought for explanations of the absence of a British peasantry and of a tradition of food production linked to other sources of family income than the standard historical explanations provide. Into this gap steps a celebrated agricultural historian, Joan Thirsk, who was an economic historian at Oxford for many years and was editor of several volumes in the massive Cambridge Agrarian History of England and Wales. Her new book *Alternative Agriculture: a history from the black death to the present day* (Oxford University Press, #25), explains a great deal.

She finds that for centuries farmers, landowners, tithe-gatherers and even statisticians have been concerned almost exclusively with the production of basic foodstuffs in the forms of grain and meat. But there have been periods when, for a variety of reasons, markets have collapsed and a greater diversity of products has crept in. After each of these periods, she argues, though farmers return to the pursuit of mainstream foodstuffs, some new procedures or specialities in each phase "carried positive benefits onto the next".

Her argument is that three phases of alternative agriculture can be documented in English history: "The first occurred after the Black Death in the mid-fourteenth century, and lasted from 1350 until about 1500. The second occurred in the early modern period, and lasted

between about 1650 and 1750, though the way was being paved for it from at least 1590 if not earlier. The third occurred in the later nineteenth century, from 1879, and lasted until 1939. We are now in the 1990s involved in the fourth phase, for which a path was being opened from the 1970s."

There were different causes for each of the historical phases of searching for alternative crops, and for our current situation which results, as we all realise, from heavily subsidised chemical grain production which has done devastating damage to the environment. And one of the fascinations of Joan Thirsk's book is the way many of the same crops which we regard as alien to British farming today, were produced in the earlier alternative periods.

Amusingly she cites a manual by Walter Blith of 1652 recommending the cultivation of "clover, sainfoin, lucerne, woad, weld, madder, hops, saffron, liquorice, rape and coleseed, hemp, flax, and orchard and garden fruits". Rapeseed, far from being an intruder, first appeared here as a serious crop in the 1560s and remained until the nineteenth century as a source of industrial oils. European subsidies for its use as a vegetable oil made it by 1986 "the third most widely grown arable crop in England after wheat and barley". Subsidy changes have caused a decline, but the modified oil "is already being used experimentally to drive public transport vehicles, including a ferry to Italy in Berlin, two buses in Reading two pleasure boats on the Norfolk Broads, and post office vans ... Through genetic engineering, scientists also see another use for rapeseed in cheap plastics".

Dr Thirsk pays particular attention to those turn-of-the-century land reformers like Howard or Kropotkin, who sought the repopulation of the empty countryside through the combination of intensive agriculture and industrial work. In her conclusion she reminds us that:

"In the late nineteenth century phase of alternative agriculture, Peter Kropotkin argued most eloquently in favour of labour-intensive work on the land. Demanding more horticulture, he stressed first and foremost the common sense of growing fruit and vegetables at home to replace rising imports, but he also pleaded the good sense of providing work for all.

A policy of 'low labour and high technology' had met the situation until 1870, he argued, but after that it was no longer appropriate. The same may be said today. A notable characteristic of many horticultural ventures is again their labour-intensivity, and in a climate of opinion which also acknowledges labour as a therapy, it is striking how often the horticulturists themselves stress the value of their work, despite the hard manual labour. Since far-sighted individuals have forecast the impossibility of restoring full employment now that modern technology is daily reducing the work required, we plainly await another Peter Kropotkin to pronounce the same lesson all over again. The continuing obsessive drive to foster technology and shed labour at all costs belongs appropriately to the phase of mainstream agriculture, and not to the alternative phase ..."

Naturally I find this an absorbing conclusion, especially since Dr Thirsk adds that:

"... judging by the experience of the three previous phases of alternative agriculture, the strong assumption of our age that omniscient governments will lead the way

out of economic problems will not, in practice, serve. The solutions are more likely to come from below, from the initiatives of individuals, singly or in groups, groping their way, after many trials and errors, towards fresh undertakings. They will follow their own hunches, ideals, inspirations and obsessions, and along the way some will even be dismissed as harmless lunatics."

Her findings have great importance for the shapers of rural policy, and especially rural planning policy. Especially, since she is a veteran recorder of the economic history of agriculture, it is absorbing to see how far she is from current discussion on the need for new homes with its assumption that 'brown-field' sites (in existing towns and cities) are virtuous, and 'green-field' sites (in the country) are the rape of the countryside. For she automatically sees the "diversion of the rural economy, permitting agriculture and industry to co-exist in the same communities, and even in the same households", as a way of avoiding "the painful social disruption which followed later when industrial growth demanded that workers live in towns".

She hopes that maintaining and increasing village populations could "relieve the heavy pressure on towns". It is marvellous to see current assumptions turned upside down simply through paying attention to rural history instead of to un-historical nimbyism. This is the most significant book on the rural economy and on the assumptions of rural planning for many years.

## ENCOUNTERS IN GRENOBLE

FREEDOM PRESS

\* article taken from "ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK" in Freedom  
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Marked-up by Chuck Munson on April 19th, 1996

It is certainly an indication of the changing audience for anarchist propaganda that the latest international anarchist gathering was set up by the Sociology Department of the Pierre Mendes France University at Grenoble in south- east France. It is one of several universities sharing the same campus outside the town, reached by an enviably cheap and frequent tramway whose quiet and comfortable vehicles should be envied by British cities.

The conference on La Culture Libertaire ran from 21st to 23rd March with over thirty sessions (some parallel) running from 9am to 7pm for three days. Admission was free to all and every session was packed with young and old, sitting in the aisles of the lecture theatre and often in an adjacent room with a television screen. As a non-polyglot, I skipped plenty of sessions, but each had audiences of between 100 and 150, and the problem was usually that of finding a seat and of sitting next to the right whispering translator among friends from Holland, Switzerland or France.

Downstairs a variety of bookstalls peddled the impressive range of anarchist literature in French, German, Italian and Spanish. In sheer volume, the most

remarkable of all was probably the Atelier de Cre'ation Libertaire (BP 1186, 69202, Lyon, Cedex 01, France, and the associated bookshop Librarie La Gryffe, 5 rue Sebastien Gryphe, 69007, Lyon, France). However, I also learned from Alternative Libertaire (BP 177, 75967, Paris, Cedex 20, France) that Jean Maitron's history of the French anarchist movement has recently been published in Arabic in Lebanon.

When we consider the failure of the international anarchist movement to penetrate beyond the European and North or South American world (apart from well-known incursions in China, Japan and Korea, as well as parallel trends in India), this is intriguing news. But why did it have to be history, rather than an application of anarchist ideas to the current ferment in what, to us, is the Middle East?

This question of contemporary relevance was one of the themes of several participants, and was phrased in various ways as the difference between the old and the new anarchism. It was tackled head-on by Rossella Di Leo from the Italian group who publish the monthly *Rivista A*, the quarterly *Volonta* and the *Eleuthera* series of books with authors ranging from Kurt Vonnegut to Marge Piercy (Edizione *Volonta*, casella postale 10667 20110, Milano, Italy). She urged us to avoid recriminations between different concepts of anarchism and to be conscious of current trends outside our private world. "Anarchism is not just a variant of industrial archaeology" she declared, and she talked about the links between anarchist thinking and the Green movement, the women's movement, current citizen direct action campaigns, and 'chaos theory'- in geography and mathematics, as well as educational and biological

theories about small self-governing cells as the foundation of social behaviour.

She was followed by Anna Niedzwiecka who circulated various anarchist journals from Poland, and stressed that the noteworthy fact about them was the youth of the participants. The only occasion when angry voices were heard from the audience was when Mimmo, a big bearded guy from Lyon, reported a comparison between the social characteristics of the anarchist movement in 1895 as reported at the time by Augustin Hamon in *Psychologie de l'anarchiste-socialiste* and in 1955 as discovered by his own research. His findings were much like those of two readership surveys conducted thirty years apart by Freedom, but he was accused of stealing anarchism from the industrial workers and handing it over to the graduate intelligentsia. I thought it a bit hard that he should be blamed for accurately reporting on social facts, but there wasn't any time to explore the thought that sometime in the next century a new anarchist movement might arise from-the 'underclass' created by the collapse of industrial employment throughout the western world.

But there was a series of arguments worth pursuing further. For example, John Clark from Louisiana was talking about links between the ecological movement and libertarianism, an issue nicely explored in the Freedom Press pamphlet *Deep Ecology and Anarchism*, but when we took the bus to Charnrousse to have a meal out of doors with snow all around us, we fell to talking about Cajun music instead of the issues involved. Personal enthusiasms took over from ideology.

Eduardo Colombo, a veteran from L@ Protesta in Buenos Aires but long settled in Paris, and a student of the psychology of anarchism, placed us at various points on an overlapping continuum. Anarchists, he felt, can be located in several categories of attitude.

They include:

1. The Millenarians, who believe that one day everything will change, after a 'social revolution'.
2. The Post-Enlightenment radical relativists, who expect a series of different and uneven radical changes in society.
3. The Eternal Rebels, who become anarchists for reasons related to their personal psychology.
4. Those whose anarchism is part of their whole social situation. This, he argued, was true for example among unionists workers in various trades in the FORA in Buenos Aires or the CNT in Barcelona. This is the kind of anarchism that can actually provoke revolutions, but not necessarily sustain them.

Rudolf De Jong from Amsterdam took as his title 'Anarchism after the Fall of the Berlin Wall', in order to raise the issue of real and unreal revolutions. He remarked that there used to be a song about the fall of the Bastille in the French revolution. It said: "The Bastille has fallen / And nothing has changed." This, suggested De Jong, was both true and untrue. Nobody had actually resisted the attack on the Bastille and nobody had resisted the attack on the Berlin Wall. But there were deep differences between the two unresisted mass movements. Unlike the French revolution of 1789 or the Spanish revolution of 1936, the fall of the wall in 1989 was accompanied by no new ideas. Its aim was simply to bring to an end the absurdly oppressive old

regime, whose population was continually declining as people risked their lives just to get out. But the only alternative on offer was that of a capitalist market economy - dissenting voices from the left were either in prison or in exile or had given up the struggle. Nobody was left to produce new ideas on how to organise the production and distribution of goods and services, so the poor became still poorer and the victims of the old regime were also the victims of the new one too.

De Jong compared the Spanish revolution of 1936 which affected about ten million people at the most, with the events of 1989 which affected the three hundred million inhabitants of the Soviet Empire. Statistics apart, one of his important arguments was that if some selective virus killed off all the world's anarchists tomorrow, anarchism as an idea would survive and emerge in every kind of society.

The same kind of issue was raised by a variety of speakers: Alain Pessin, our host, Ronald Creagh from Montpellier and Peter Schrempf from Switzerland, who reminded us of the theme of 'Old and New Anarchism' had been the subject of an international meeting in 1974 when Luce Fabbri called for a "sotto voce anarchism" when it is likely to get a hearing, urged us to remember that it wasn't necessary to pose the one against the other. I seem to remember the same sentiments in 1984 at the Venice gathering, and I certainly believe that adherents of both old and new anarchism, if in fact they differ, should push their own approaches, not among each other but in the unfriendly world outside.

In fact, I heard of about half a dozen experiments in applied anarchism when I was in Grenoble. Jean-Manuel

Traimond, who was kind enough to act as my translator, is the author of a book of stories from the 25-year-old squatter settlement in Christiania, Copenhagen (see also article on page 7). Other people talked about the school called Bonaventure on an island north of Bordeaux, and about the community called Los Arer@lejos, Spain). I learned how Peter Schremps had organised a cooperative cleaning agency in Switzerland, by-passing

Auzias about a progressive school venture in Nantes (the Lycée Autogéré) organized within the official system by Gabriel Cohn-Bendit. Anarchism does slip in with a quiet but persistent voice.

That was the message I brought back from Grenoble.

## TEMPORARY AUTONOMOUS ZONES

Freedom, Spring 1997

I've a big agenda of books I would like to read or write and for ordinary reasons, like a low income, I stay at home but get lured abroad when somebody else pays the fares. This explains why anarchists from several countries, like France, Germany, the Netherlands and Italy, have asked me for my opinion on the views of Hakim Bey.

It is always an embarrassment since for a long time I had no idea about who this person and his opinions were or are. Plenty of us, including myself, are hesitant about revealing the vast scope of our own ignorance. Two sources have explained to me what these questioners were talking about. One, of course, is Freedom's invaluable feature 'Food for Thought ... and Action!' and the other is Murray Bookchin's recent book *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: An Unbridgeable Chasm* (Edinburgh, AK Press f5.95, post-free from Freedom Press).

Bookchin and I have opposite ways of coping with people whose ideas have some kind of connection with our own but with whom we disagree. His is to pulverise them with criticism so that they won't emerge again. Mine is to follow the policy of Paul Goodman, who had been a subject of the Bookchin scorn. Goodman enjoyed telling a fable:

'Tom says to Jerry: 'Do you want to fight? Cross that line!' and Jerry does. 'Now', cries Tom, 'you're on my

side!' We draw the line in their conditions; we proceed on our own conditions."

As a propagandist I usually find it more useful to claim as comrades the people whose ideas are something like mine, and to stress the common ground, rather than to wither them up in a deluge of scorn.

What I learn from Bookchin's book is that Hakim Bey's book is called TAZ: The Temporary Autonomous Zone, Ontological Anarchism, Poetic Terrorism [out of print: Editors], that the author's real name is Peter Lamborn Wilson, and that his book has a whole lot of notions that wouldn't appeal to people of the Bookchin/Ward generation. And after his demolition job, Murray asks: "What, finally, is a 'temporary autonomous zone'?" He explains it with a quotation from Hakim Bey describing how:

"The TAZ is like an uprising which does not engage directly with the state, a guerrilla operation which liberates an area (of land, of time, of imagination) and then dissolves itself, to re-form elsewhere / elsewhen, before the state can crush it."

And he goes on to quote from Hakim Bey's essay how in a TAZ we can "realise many of our true desires, even if only for a season, a brief Pirate Utopia, a warped free-zone in the old Space/Time continuum" and how 'potential TAZs' include "the sixties-style tribal gathering, the forest conclave of eco-saboteurs, the idyllic Beltane of the neopagans, anarchist conferences, and gay faery circles" not to speak of, as Murray quotes, "night-clubs, banquets" and "old-time libertarian picnics" - no less.

Murray Bookchin, naturally, comments that "having been a member of the Libertarian League in the 1960s, I would love to see the Bey and his disciples surface at an 'old-time libertarian picnic' !" And he makes some down-to-earth comments on Hakim Bey's praise for "voluntary illiteracy" and for homelessness as "in a sense a virtue, an adventure".

Rightly, in my view, Murray remarks that:

"Alas, homelessness can be an 'adventure' when one has a comfortable home to return to, while nomadism is the distinct luxury of those who can afford to live without earning their livelihood. Most of the 'nomadic' hoboes I recall so vividly from the Great Depression era suffered desperate lives of hunger, disease and indignity and usually died prematurely - as they still do today in the streets of urban America."

He wins us over to stern realism, but that one concept of Temporary Autonomous Zones is so familiar to me, and probably to him too, that it's worth considering outside the Hakim Bey context. Plenty of us must have been in situations when we reflect that we all have certain experiences that seem to us to be the way things would happen if we were living in an anarchist society.

I think it was as long ago as 1970 that a reader of *Anarchy*, Graham Whiteman, was writing there about the equivalent of temporary autonomous zones that he perceived in the vast rock or pop festivals that started happening in 1967, notably the event at Woodstock in New York State in August 1969. There were plenty more closer to home in the subsequent 25 years.

But once the phrase Temporary Autonomous Zones lodges in your mind you begin to see it/them everywhere: fleeting pockets of anarchy that occur in daily life. In this sense it describes a perhaps more useful concept than that of an anarchist society, since the most libertarian societies that we know of have their authoritarian elements, and vice versa. I was reading recently the biography by Michael Holroyd of the painter Augustus John, a self-declared anarchist who was also rather a monster in creating around himself the particular version of anarchy that appealed to him. Holroyd is describing John's return, in his 73rd year in 1950 to St-Rémy in France, to a place he had left in a hurry in 1939:

'French feeding wasn't what it had been and the wine seemed to have gone off. But in the evening, at the Café des Variétés, he could still obtain that peculiar equilibrium of spirit and body he described as 'detachment-in-intimacy'. The conversation whirled around him, the accordion played, and sometimes he was rewarded 'by the apparition of a face or part of a face, a gesture or conjunction of forms which I recognise as belonging to a more real and harmonious world than that to which we are accustomed'."

The old painter's last phrase describes rather beautifully the sensation of what another Freedom contributor, Brian Richardson, calls "golden moments". His unaccustomed glimpse of a more real and harmonious world is the meaning that I am inclined to ascribe to the words about Temporary Autonomous Zones.

## HEALTHY AUTONOMY

Freedom, 24th July 1999  
(<http://vega.soi.city.ac.uk/~louise/freehome.html>)

I have a strong bias in favour of research findings so long as they support my ideological preconceptions. This is why in October 1996 I keenly reported in this column a Channel 4 Equinox feature that told me how dominant baboons and top civil servants have fewer heart problems and live longer than subordinate baboons and bottom civil servants. ('Affairs of the Heart', Freedom, 5th October 1996).

An epidermiologist, Richard Wilkinson, from University College London, studying health files covering a long period found that "high rank carries with it the privilege of control, freedom from censure and powers of delegation, whereas the stress that features in the live of society's subordinates siphons off energy vital to powering the body's natural functions".

He then learned of Californian long-term studies of baboons and another study of monkeys which noted that the low-status monkeys that suffered most were lonely isolates. Those who, despite their inferior position in the pecking order, engaged to the full in social activities like mutual grooming, non-mating intercourse with the other sex and playing with infants, had far better life chances. I, of course, extrapolated to the concept of workers' control by way of the findings of industrial psychologists about satisfaction depending on the 'span of autonomy' and the finding that the self-employed, though poor and insecure but continually making decisions for

themselves, are happier and live longer. Sadly, that television programme of 15th September 1996 brought little public discussion, but I hope that the resulting book will. It is *The Social Determinants of Health* by Michael Marmot and Richard Wilkinson, to be published in August at £26.50. Describing its findings in *The Guardian* for 6th July 1999, Jane Feinmann describes how their work on the health records of 17,000 civil servants was followed by a further study which "delted further and found that you don't have to be hugely rich and important to enjoy optimum health, although it helps. It's the power to control all aspects of your life - work particularly - that wealth and status tend to confer that is the key determinant of health. Men who have low job control face a 50% higher risk of new illness: heart attacks, stroke, diabetes or merely ordinary infections. Women are at slightly lower risk but low job control was still a factor in whether they fell ill or not."

This phenomenon has already been given a label: 'the biology of social inequality', and Professor Wilkinson adds that, "as humans we are exquisitely sensitive to our position in the hierarchy, to put-downs, being excluded, or not being valued. Simply being at the bottom of the heap causes an acute state of anxiety - which explains why the adrenal glands of paupers are larger than those of the middle classes".

In the same article Jane Feinmann also reports that the Health Education Authority (HEA) is to launch a People at Work campaign at the end of this month. I don't know who funds the HEA, but its new leaflet *People at Work* identifies lack of control over work as a major stressor. It also encourages people to stand up against bullying,

form alliances with colleagues, join trade unions and get involved in schemes that promote staff participation.

However, these are not the trends observable in working environments today. Trade union membership has dropped by a huge proportion in the past twenty years, and worker participation is not a phrase you hear nowadays. Alliances with colleagues are not likely to be found in the casualisation of work that is seen in every aspect of life. Jane Feinmann also cites the view of Professor Pamela Gillies, HEA director of research, that "poverty doesn't necessarily mean bad health".

In that television interview of 1996, Professor Wilkinson made the same point slightly differently. He said: "Wealth does not determine health. What does is the gap between the rich and the poor. The larger the gap, the sicker the society". Now we know how that gap grew wider all through the 1980s and is now on the rise again. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation's report *Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion: Labour's Inheritance* found at the end of last year that the number of people in Britain living on low incomes relative to the average is far higher than it was twenty years ago, with the number in households with below half average income rising from four millions in 1982 to eleven million in 1992. Although the number fell in the mid - 1990s, 1996-97 showed a significant increase of over 9% to 10.5 million individuals. Just one of them is me, and I expect that another is you.

Colin Ward

## SLIPPERY SCHOOLING ISSUES

Freedom Press, 21st August 1999  
(<http://www.ecn.org/freedom/index.html>)

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When school pupils demonstrated in London last month, support came from the local MP John Gummer, an unloved minister in recent Conservative governments, who talked to the Labour government's Education Secretary David Blunkett, about the issues involved. The issue for Gummer was that "although the style of education offered at Summerhill school is not one I would choose for my own children, parents should have the right to opt for it". Zoe Readhead remarked that "this is a school that has been inspected every year since 1990 and we are feeling battered and bruised".

Indeed the creeping totalitarianism of the management of education has made the issue not one of freedom in education, but of freedom to follow a different pattern from the utilitarian vision of Ofsted (the Office for Standards in Education) and what the Times Educational Supplement calls "the fearsome figure of Chief Inspector Chris Woodhead". Our own pursuit of a particular vision of education becomes subordinate to our need to oppose current trends.

A neighbour told me recently that at her daughter's primary school in Ipswich, the need to introduce more maths teaching time had resulted in the abandonment of the weekly swimming lesson at the public baths. As she put it, "I would prefer her to be a better swimmer than a better mathematician".

Meanwhile a researcher into anarchist theories of education writes to me to complain that "they're a slippery bunch, these anarchists" because she finds a whole series of anarchist theories, which, however, share some common features. She lists these as:

1. The absence of coercion from the educational process;
2. Belief in the child's 'natural' motivation to learn and insistence on a pedagogy which draws on this;
3. Concern about the child's capacity to resist an ideology imposed by the school;
4. Education of the 'whole child'.

And she raises with me a specific question "in a pluralistic society, if one takes seriously the idea of letting people run their own lives, what would be the anarchist response to communities/people choosing, for example, to educate their children in an oppressive/religious/fundamentalist/totalitarian manner ... or, at the other end of the spectrum, if such autonomously-run communities were to naturally choose and develop a system resembling something like a parliamentary democracy, would this be objectionable from an anarchist perspective?"

The first of these questions is a live issue here and now. Whether we want to or not, and whether or not we use it, we all pay through taxation for the school system. The rich also pay for expensive private schools. In the absence of an anarchist revolution many of us would like to see the freedom of choice for all approached by some other countries. Fiona Carnie in her excellent chapter on 'Education on a human scale' in the book *Richer Futures* (edited by Ken Worpole, Earthscan, 1999), describes

how in the Netherlands a variety of schools are financed on the same basis as state schools "with the effect that 70% of children attend what are known as 'private' schools, but

which are in fact publicly funded". She explains that "in Denmark any group of twelve parents wishing to set up a school will receive 85% of the necessary funds from the state". And she turns to the theme raised by my correspondent: "The question of whether faith schools should receive state funding is a major issue in the debate about diversity. In January 1998 two Muslim schools became part of the English state system amidst much media coverage and public discussion. As a human rights issue, the decision to publicly fund these schools is long overdue. In a system which finances Protestant, Catholic and some Jewish schools, it is essential that Muslim schools are funded too, if there is sufficient parental demand, as a matter of justice. Either we should have no state funded religious schools at all (as in France) or give the same rights to different groups of parents, as long as they fulfil the required criteria for state funding which these Muslim schools have done..."

Now if we lived in a stateless society and funded schools differently, it seems to me that, however much anarchists disapproved of religious indoctrination, they would be laying up trouble for themselves in preventing parents from putting their educational ideas into effect. Fiona Carnie argues that schools associated with religious faiths will continue to exist whether or not they receive state funding, and adds that "it is surely preferable from the children's standpoint that they are part of the system rather than outside it and are thus subject to inspection and required to meet certain standards".

This is where anarchists would part company with her. In the age of control- obsessed governments like that of Thatcher/Major and that of Blair, school inspectors have changed like everything else. Neill used to have friendly arguments with the Inspectorate and would publish the HMI reports in his books about the school. But as his daughter found, you can't have a discussion with the hard men of Ofsted.

What can we say as anarchists, except that in an anarchist society school inspection would be undertaken by children for the Consumers' Association?

Colin Ward

## VERNON RICHARDS

Monday February 4, 2002; The Guardian

His single-minded efforts helped keep the anarchist voice alive

Across seven decades, Vernon Richards, who has died aged 86, maintained an anarchist presence in British publishing. His chosen instrument was Freedom Press, based in Whitechapel, in London's east end. He edited the anarchist paper Freedom - and its prewar and wartime variations - into the 1960s. Earlier, he had been imprisoned in 1945, written a biography of the Italian anarchist Errico Malatesta, and photographed George Orwell.

Born Vero Recchioni in Soho, Vernon was the son of the Italian anarchist Ernidio Recchioni, who had escaped from what was then the prison island of Pantelleria in the 1890s, set up the famous Italian delicatessen King Bomba, in Soho, and taken part in interwar plots to assassinate Mussolini.

Vernon was educated at Emmanuel school, Wandsworth, and graduated in civil engineering from King's College London in 1939. In his Soho childhood, he had been taught the violin by the conductor John Barbirolli's uncle, and had performed the orchestral repertoire.

By 1934, he was becoming active in the battle against Mussolini, and, in 1935, was deported from France, where he had met the Italian anarchist Camillo Berneri, and fallen in love with his daughter, Marie-Louise. Back

in London, he anglicised his name to Vernon Richards and, collaborating with Berneri in Paris, started publishing Free Italy/Italia Libera.

In 1936, the year the Spanish civil war began, Vernon joined the veterans of Freedom - founded in the 1880s, it had effectively ceased publication by 1932 - to produce Spain And The World as an English-language voice for Spanish anarchists. This was at a time when the only version of events in Spain being heard on the left in Britain was that of the News Chronicle and New Statesman, supporting the Soviet-backed popular front. In October 1937, Marie-Louise joined Vernon in London, and, to give her citizenship, they married. She and their baby died in childbirth in 1949.

Between the end of the Spanish civil war and the outbreak of the second world war, the fortnightly Spain And The World briefly became Revolt!, before adopting the title War Commentary. Registered as a conscientious objector, Vernon worked in a reserved occupation as a railway engineer. In 1945, War Commentary resumed the title of Freedom.

The previous year, however, four of the group around the paper - Vernon, Marie-Louise, Philip Sansom and John Hewetson - had been charged with conspiring to cause disaffection among members of the armed forces. Despite a defence campaign backed by the likes of Orwell, Michael Tippett, TS Eliot and Benjamin Britten, Vernon, Sansom and Hewetson were convicted and served nine months in jail.

Prison gave Vernon the chance to resume playing the violin, and indeed, form a scratch band with other

incarcerated musicians. Friends regretted that he never played again after his release. He never practised as a civil engineer again either, saying that the one thing he learned in prison was the folly of pursuing a "career".

Instead, he ran the family business at 37 Old Compton Street, Soho, until it was sold in the 1950s. He also worked as a freelance photographer -producing latterly famous images of Orwell in the mid-1940s - and as an organic gardener and travel courier. Convinced that the links formed by tourism were a liberatory influence, opening closed frontiers, he went to Franco's Spain and the Soviet Union. In 1968, he and Peta Hewetson moved to a smallholding in Suffolk, where, for almost 30 years, Vernon produced vegetables for the organic market.

After 1951, he continued to edit Freedom as a weekly, and wrote, in weekly instalments, his continually reprinted and translated Lessons Of The Spanish Revolution (1953). He quit as Freedom's editor in 1964, but assumed the role again whenever he felt that others were pushing it in the wrong direction. It was not until the 1990s that he finally stopped writing for the paper. By this time, Freedom Press, as an anarchist publisher, had a spectacular range of books in print.

Looking for the source of Vernon's single-mindedness, friends assumed that his father had set him in motion, though I once heard him dismiss Ernidio as a "bourgeois terrorist". The anarchist who influenced him most was Malatesta.

In his dedication, Vernon was a quite ruthless exploiter of others. None of the group he had inspired in the 1940s - Sansom, Hewetson, and George Woodcock - were on

speaking terms with him at the times of their deaths. Unable to recognise himself as a manipulator, he saw their withdrawal from his circle as proof that they had been seduced by capitalist values.

At the end of the 1990s, admirers sponsored the publication by Freedom Press of four books of Vernon's photographs. In 1999, the Centre For Catalan Studies produced an album of his pictures, taken after 1957 while he was escorting holidaymakers to the then poverty-stricken Catalan village of L'Escala. For local families, the book became a precious record of their grandparents, their dignity and hard times.

Peta predeceased him in 1997.

· Vernon Richards (Vero Recchioni), writer and publisher, born July 19 1915; died December 10 2001

## A SELF-EMPLOYED SOCIETY

THE SPLIT BETWEEN LIFE AND WORK IS PROBABLY THE GREATEST CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL PROBLEM. YOU CANNOT EXPECT MEN TO TAKE A RESPONSIBLE ATTITUDE AND TO DISPLAY INITIATIVE IN DAILY LIFE WHEN THEIR WHOLE WORKING EXPERIENCE DEPRIVES THEM OF THE CHANCE OF INITIATIVE AND RESPONSIBILITY. THE PERSONALITY CANNOT BE SUCCESSFULLY DIVIDED INTO WATERTIGHT COMPARTMENTS, AND EVEN THE ATTEMPT TO DO SO IS DANGEROUS: IF A MAN IS TAUGHT TO RELY UPON A PATERNALISTIC AUTHORITY WITHIN THE FACTORY, HE WILL BE READY TO RELY UPON ONE OUTSIDE. IF HE IS RENDERED IRRESPONSIBLE AT WORK BY LACK OF OPPORTUNITY FOR RESPONSIBILITY, HE WILL BE IRRESPONSIBLE WHEN AWAY FROM WORK TOO. THE CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL TREND TOWARDS A CENTRALISED, PATERNALISTIC, AUTHORITARIAN SOCIETY ONLY REFLECTS CONDITIONS WHICH ALREADY EXIST WITHIN THE FACTORY.

GORDON RATTRAY TAYLOR, ARE WORKERS HUMAN?

The novelist, Nigel Balchin, was once invited to address a conference on 'incentives' in industry. He remarked that 'Industrial psychologists must stop messing about with tricky and ingenious bonus schemes and find out why a man, after a hard day's work, went home and enjoyed digging in his garden.'

But don't we already know why? He enjoys going home and digging in his garden because there he is free from foremen, managers and bosses. He is free from the monotony and slavery of doing the same thing day in day out, and is in control of the whole job from start to

finish. He is free to decide for himself how and when to set about it. He is responsible to himself and not to somebody else. He is working because he wants to and not because he has to. He is doing his own thing. He is his own man.

The desire to 'be your own boss' is very common indeed. Think of all the people whose secret dream or cherished ambition is to run a small-holding or a little shop or to set up in trade on their own account, even though it may mean working night and day with little prospect of solvency. Few of them are such optimists as to think they will make a fortune that way. What they want above all is the sense of independence and of controlling their own destinies.

The fact that in the twentieth century the production and distribution of goods and services is far too complicated to be run by millions of one-man businesses doesn't lessen this urge for self-determination, and the politicians, managers and giant international corporations know it. This is why they present every kind of scheme for 'workers' participation', 'joint management', 'profit sharing', 'industrial co-partnership', everything in fact from suggestion boxes to works councils, to give the worker the feeling that he is more than a cog in the industrial machine while making sure that effective control of industry is kept out of the hands of the man on the factory floor.

They are in fact like the rich man in Tolstoy's fable - they will do anything for the worker except get off his back. In every industrial country, and probably in every agricultural country, the idea of workers' control has manifested itself at one time or another - as a demand, an

aspiration, a programme or a dream. To confine ourselves to one century and one country, it was the basis of two parallel movements in Britain around the First World War, Syndicalism and Guild Socialism. These two movements dwindled away in the early 1920s, but ever since then there have been sporadic and periodic attempts to re-create a movement for workers' control of industry.

From some points of view the advocates of workers' control had much more reason for optimism in 1920 than today. In that year the Sankey Report (a majority report of a Royal Commission) advocating 'joint control' and public ownership of the mining industry in Britain, was turned down by the government for being too radical, and by the shop stewards for not being radical enough. When the mines were actually nationalised after almost thirty years, nothing even as mild as joint control was either proposed or demanded. In 1920, too, the Building Guilds began their brief but successful existence. In our own day it is inconceivable that large local authorities would let big building contracts to guilds of workers, or that the co-operative movement would finance them.

The idea that workers should have some say in the running of their industries was accepted then in a way that it has never been since. And yet the trade union movement today is immeasurably stronger than it was in the days when workers' control was a widespread demand. What has happened is that the labour movement as a whole has accepted the notion that you gain more by settling for less.

In most Western countries, as Anthony Crossland pointed out, the unions, 'greatly aided by propitious

changes in the political and economic background, have achieved a more effective control through the independent exercise of their collective bargaining strength than they would ever have achieved by following the path (beset as it is by practical difficulties on which all past experiments have foundered) of direct workers' management. Indeed, we may risk the generalisation that the greater the power of the unions the less the interest in workers' management.'

His observation is true, even if it is unpalatable for those who would like to see the unions, or some more militantly syndicalist kind of industrial union, as the vehicle for workers' control. Many advocates of workers' control have seen the unions as the organs through which it is to be exercised, assuming presumably that the attainment of workers' control would bring complete community of interest in industry and that the defensive role of the unions would become obsolete. (This is, of course, the assumption behind trade union organisation in the Soviet empire).

I think this view is a gross oversimplification. Before the First World War, the Webbs pointed out that 'the decisions of the most democratically elected executive committees with regard to wages, hours and conditions of employment of particular sections of their fellow workers, do not always satisfy the latter, or even seem to them to be just'. And the Yugoslav scholar, Branko Pribicevic, in his history of the shop-stewards' movement in Britain, emphasises this point in criticising the reliance on the idea of control by industrial unions:

Control of industry is largely incompatible with a union's character as a voluntary association of the workers,

formed primarily to protect and represent their interests. Even in the most democratic industrial system, i.e. a system in which the workers would have a share in control, there would still be a need for unions . . . Now if we assume that managements would be responsible to the body of workers, we cannot exclude the possibility of individual injustices and mistakes. Such cases must be taken up by the union . . . It seems most improbable that a union could fulfil any of these tasks successfully if it were also the organ of industrial administration or, in other words, if it had ceased to be a voluntary organisation . . . It was unfortunate that the idea of workers' control was almost completely identified with the concept of union control . . .

It was obvious throughout that the unions would oppose any doctrine aiming at creating a representative structure in industry parallel with their own. In fact, in the only instances we know of in Britain, of either complete or partial workers' control, the trade union structure is entirely separate from the administration, and there has never been any suggestion that it should be otherwise. What are these examples ? Well, there are the co-operative co-partnerships which make, for instance, some of the footwear sold in retail co-operative societies. These are, so far as they go, genuine examples of workers' control (needless to say I am not speaking of the factories run by the Co-operative Wholesale Society on orthodox capitalist lines), but they do not seem to have any capacity for expansion, or to exercise any influence on industry in general. There are the fishermen of Brixham in Devon, and the miners of Brora on the coast of Sutherland in Scotland. This pit was to have shut down, but instead the miners took it over from the National Coal Board and formed a company of their

own. Then there are those firms where some form of control by the employees has been sought by idealistic employers. (I am thinking of firms like Scott Bader Ltd., and Farmer and Co., not of those heavily paternalistic chocolate manufacturers or of spurious co-partnerships). There are also odd small workshops like the factories in Scotland and Wales of the Rowen Engineering Company.

I mention these examples, not because they have any economic significance, but because the general view is that control of industry by workers is a beautiful idea which is utterly impracticable because of some unspecified deficiency, not in the idea, but in those people labelled as 'workers'. The Labour Correspondent of The Times remarked of ventures of this kind that, while they provide 'a means of harmonious self-government in a small concern', there is no evidence that they provide 'any solution to the problem of establishing democracy in large-scale industry'. And even more widespread than the opinion that workers have a built-in capacity for managing themselves, is the regretful conclusion that workers' control is a nice idea, but one which is totally incapable of realisation because of the scale and complexity of modern industry.

Daniel Guerin recommends an interpretation of anarchism which 'rests upon large-scale modern industry, up-to-date techniques, the modern proletariat, and internationalism on a world scale'. But he does not tell us how. On the face of it, we could counter the argument about scope and scale by pointing out how changes in sources of motive power make the geographical concentration of industry obsolete, and how changing methods of production (automation for example) make

the concentration of vast numbers of people obsolete too. Decentralisation is perfectly feasible, and probably economically advantageous within the structure of industry as it is today.

But the arguments based on the complexity of modern industry actually mean something quite different. What the sceptics really mean is that while they can imagine the isolated case of a small enterprise in which the shares are held by the employees, but which is run on ordinary business lines - like Scott Bader Ltd. - or while they can accept the odd example of a firm in which a management committee is elected by the workers -like the co-operative co-partnerships - they cannot imagine those who manipulate the commanding heights of the economy being either disturbed by or, least of all, influenced by, these admirable smallscale precedents. And they are right, of course: the minority aspiration for workers' control which never completely dies, has at the same time never been widespread enough to challenge the controllers of industry, in spite of the ideological implications of the 'work-in'.

vThe tiny minority who would like to see revolutionary changes need not cherish any illusions about this. Neither in the political parties of the Left nor in the trade union movement will they find more than a similar minority in agreement. Nor does the history of syndicalist movements in any country, even Spain, give them any cause for optimism. Geoffrey Ostergaard puts their dilemma in these terms:

"To be effective as defensive organisations, the unions needed to embrace as many workers as possible and this inevitably led to a dilution of their revolutionary

objectives. In practice, the syndicalists were faced with the choice of unions which were either reformist and purely defensive or revolutionary and largely ineffective. Is there a way out of this dilemma? An approach which combines the ordinary day-to-day struggle of workers in industry over wages and conditions with a more radical attempt to shift the balance of power in the factory? I believe that there is, in what the syndicalists and guild socialists used to describe as 'encroaching control' by means of the 'collective contract'. The syndicalists saw this as 'a system by which the workers within a factory or shop would undertake a specific amount of work in return for a lump sum to be allocated by the work-group as it saw fit, on condition that the employers abdicated their control of the productive process itself'

The late G. D. H. Cole, who returned to the advocacy of the collective contract system towards the end of his life, claimed that

'the effect would be to link the members of the working group together in a common enterprise under their joint auspices and control, and to emancipate them from an externally imposed discipline in respect of their method of getting the work done'.

I believe that it has, and my evidence for this belief comes from the example of the gang system worked in some Coventry factories which has some aspects in common with the collective contract idea, and the 'Composite work' system worked in some Durham coal mines, which has everything in common with it. The first of these, the gang system, was described by an American professor of industrial and management engineering,

Seymour Melman, in his book *Decision-Making and Productivity*, where he sought 'to demonstrate that there are realistic alternatives to managerial rule over production'. I have been publicising this book for years simply because in all the pretentious drivel of industrial management literature (which may not fool the workers, but certainly fools management) it is the only piece of research I have come across which raises the key question: is management necessary? Melman sought out an identical product made under dissimilar conditions, and found it in the Ferguson tractor made under license in both Detroit and Coventry. His account of the operation of the gang system in Coventry was confirmed for me by a Coventry engineering worker, Reg Wright. Of Standard's tractor factory (he is writing of the period before Standard sold the plant to Massey-Ferguson in 1956, and before Leyland took over Standard), Melman declares, 'In this firm we will show that at the same time thousands of workers operated virtually without supervision as conventionally understood, and at high productivity: the highest wage in British industry was paid; high quality products were produced at acceptable prices in extensively mechanised plants; the management conducted its affairs at unusually low costs; also, organised workers had a substantial role in production decision-making.' The production policy of the firm at that time was most unorthodox for the motor industry and was the resultant of two inter-related decision-making systems, that of the workers and that of management:

'In production, the management has been prepared to pay a high wage and to organise production via the gang system which requires management to deal with a grouped work force, rather than with single workers, or

with small groups . . . the foremen are concerned with the detailed surveillance of things rather than with the detailed control over people . . . The operation of integrated plants employing 10,000 production workers did not require the elaborate and costly hallmark of business management.'

In the motor-car factory fifteen gangs ranged in size from fifty to five hundred people and the tractor factory was organised as one huge gang. From the standpoint of the production workers 'the gang system leads to keeping track of goods instead of keeping track of people'. For payment purposes the output that was measured was the output of the whole group. In relation to management, Melman points out:

'The grouped voice of a work force had greater impact than the pressure of single workers. This effect of the gang system, coupled with trade unionism, is well understood among many British managements. As a result, many managements have opposed the use of the gang system and have argued the value of single worker incentive payments.'

In a telling comparison, Melman contrasts the 'predatory competition' which characterises the managerial decision-making system with the workers' decision-making system in which

'The most characteristic feature of the decision-formulating process is that of mutuality in decision-making with final authority residing in the hands of the grouped workers themselves.'

Emphasising the human significance of this mode of industrial organisation, Reg Wright says:

The gang system sets men's minds free from many worries and enables them to concentrate completely on the job. It provides a natural frame of security, it gives confidence, shares money equally, uses all degrees of skill without distinction and enables jobs to be allocated to the man or woman best suited to them, the allocation frequently being made by the workers themselves. Change of job to avoid monotony is an easy matter. The 'gaffer' is abolished and foremen are now technicians called in to advise, or to act in a breakdown or other emergency. In some firms a ganger will run, not the men, but the job. He will be paid out of gang earnings, and will work himself on a small gang. On a larger gang he will be fully occupied with organisation and supply of parts and materials. A larger gang may have a deputy ganger as a second string and also a gang-steward who, being a keen trade unionist or workers' man, will act as a corrective should the Ganges try to favour management unduly or interfere with the individual in undesirable ways. Gang meetings are called as necessary, by the latter and all members of the gang are kept informed and may (and do) criticise everything and everybody. All three are subject to recall. Constructive ideas, on the other hand, are usually the result of one or two people thinking out and trying out new things - this is taking place continuously...

He remarks that 'The fact of taking responsibility in any of these capacities is educative in every sense.' Certainly the usual methods of work organisation are not only divisive ('They'd cut your throat for a bit more overtime,' a Ford worker told Graham Turner) but are profoundly

de-educative, reducing the worker, as Eric Gill used to put it, to a 'subhuman condition of intellectual irresponsibility'. My second example comes from the mining industry in Durham. David Douglass in his book *Pit Life in County Durham* criticises the attempts of the National Coal Board to introduce more and more supervision into the miner's work, with the intention of working the mines like factories, remarking that 'one of the few redeeming features of pit work, and one that the miners will fight to maintain, is that of independent job control', for while 'most factory workers would regard the mine purely and simply as a black and filthy hole, funnily enough the miner in turn regards the factory as a prison and its operatives as captives'. In the early days of mining in Durham, he explains, 'the miner was practically a self-governing agent. The hewers were allowed to manage their own jobs with practically a total lack of supervision. The degree of job control (though necessarily limited by private ownership) was almost complete.' Douglass describes such traditions as the cavilling system (selection of working place by ballot in order to equalise earning opportunities) as:

the fundamental way in which the Durham miner managed to maintain an equitable system of work, and managed to stave off the competitiveness, bullying and injustice of the hated butty system. In essence it was an embryo of workers' control, as can be seen from its ability to handle disputes between sets of workers without recourse to outsiders. It was a little Soviet which had grown up within the capitalist system. In a sense it was of necessity restricted in its development. It is, however, a feature of the worker intervening in the productive process in a conscious way to say: this is how I run it, you adapt it accordingly.

The same kind of attempt to run the mines as factories that David Douglass complains of, accompanied the introduction in the post-war years of the 'long-wall' system of working. A comparative study was made by the Tavistock Institute of conventional long-wall working with its introduction of the division of labour, and of factory type methods, and the composite long-wall method adopted by the miners in some pits. Its importance for my argument can be seen from the opening words of one of the Tavistock reports:

This study concerns a groups of miners who came together to evolve a new way of working together, planning the type of change they wanted to put through, and testing it in practice. The new type of work organisation which has come to be known in the industry as composite working, has in recent years emerged spontaneously in a number of different pits in the north-west Durham coalfield. Its roots go back to an earlier tradition which has been almost completely displaced in the course of the last century by the introduction of work techniques based on task segmentation, differential status and payment, and extrinsic hierarchical control.

A further report notes how the investigation shows 'the ability of quite large primary work groups of 40-50 members to act as self-regulating, self-developing social organisms able to maintain themselves in a steady state of high productivity . . . (P. G. Herbst) describes the system of composite working in a way which shows its relationship to the gang system:

The composite work organisation may be described as one in which the group takes over complete

responsibility for the total cycle of operations involved in mining the coal face. No member of the group has a fixed work-role. Instead, the men deploy themselves, depending on the requirements of the ongoing group task. Within the limits of technological and safety requirements they are free to evolve their own way of organising and carrying out their task. They are not subject to any external authority in this respect, nor is there within the group itself any member who takes over a formal directive leadership function. Whereas in conventional long-wall working the coal-getting task is split into four or eight separate work roles, carried out by different teams, each paid at a different rate, in the composite group members are no longer paid directly for any of the tasks carried out. The all-in wage agreement is, instead, based on the negotiated price per ton of coal produced by the team. The income obtained is divided equally among team members.

These examples of on-the-job workers' control are important in evolving an anarchist approach to industrial organisation. They do not entail submission to paternalistic management techniques - in fact they demolish the myths of managerial expertise and indispensability. They are a force for solidarity rather than divisiveness between workers on the basis of pay and status. They illustrate that it is possible to bring decision-making back to the factory floor and the face-to-face group. They even satisfy - though this is not my criterion for recommending them - the capitalist test of productivity. They, like the growing concept of workers' rights of possession in the job - tacitly recognised in redundancy payment legislation, actively demonstrated by workers taking over physical possession of the workplace as in the 'work-in' at Upper Clyde

Shipbuilders - have the great tactical merit of combining short-term aims with long-term aspirations. Could the workers run industry? Of course they could. They do already.

Neither of the two examples I have given of successful 'on the job' control, exists in the same form today, for reasons which have nothing to do with either their efficiency or their productivity. In the Durham example it has to do with the shift of emphasis in the (publicly-owned) National Coal Board to the coalfields of South Yorkshire and Nottingham, and in the case of Standards with the mergers (sponsored by a Labour government) which led to the formation of British Leyland as a combine large enough to compete for markets with the giant American-owned and European firms. Industry is not dominated by technical expertise, but by the sales manager, the accountant and the financial tycoon who never made anything in their lives except money. For a lucky few work is enjoyable for its own sake, but the proportion of such people in the total working population grows smaller as work becomes either more mechanised or more fragmented. Automation, which was expected to reduce the sheer drudgery of manual labour and the sheer mental drudgery of clerical work, is feared because in practice it simply reduces the number of income gaining opportunities. It is a saving of labour, not by the worker, but by the owners or controllers of capital. The lucky few are destined for the jobs which are either created by or are unaffected by automation. The unlucky majority, condemned from childhood to the dreary jobs, find them either diminished or extinguished by the 'rationalisation' of work.

Can we imagine that in a situation where the control of an industry, a factory, any kind of workplace, was in the hands of the people who work there, they would just carry on production, distribution and bottle-washing in the ways we are familiar with today? Even within capitalist society (though not within the 'public sector' which belongs to 'the people') some employers find that what they call job enlargement or job enrichment, the replacement of conveyor belt tasks by complete assembly jobs, or deliberate rotation from job to job in the production process, can increase production simply by reducing boredom. When everyone in an industry has a voice in it, would they stop at this point? In his brilliant essay *Work and Surplus*, Keith Paton imagines what would happen in a car factory taken over permanently by its workers. 'After the carnival of revolution come the appeals to return to work' but 'to get into the habit of responding to orders or exhortations to raise the GNP would be to sell the pass straight away. On the other hand production must eventually be got going on some basis or other. What basis? Return to what sort of work?'

So instead of restarting the assembly track (if the young workers haven't already smashed it) they spend two months discussing the point of their work, and how to rearrange it. Private cars ? Why do people always want to go somewhere else? Is it because where they are is so intolerable? And what part did the automobile play in making the need to escape? What about day to day convenience? Is being stuck in a traffic jam convenient? What about the cost to the country? Bugger the 'cost to the country', that's just the same crap as the national interest. Have you seen the faces of old people as they try to cross a busy main road? What about the inconvenience to pedestrians? What's the reason for

buying a car? Is it just wanting to HAVE it? Do we think the value of a car rubs off on us ? But that's the wrong way round. Does having a car really save time ? What's the average hours worked in manufacturing industry Let's look it up in the library: 45-7 hours work a week. What's the amount of the family's spending money in a week that goes on cars? 10 3 per cent of all family income. Which means more like 20 per cent if you've got a car because half of us don't have one. What's 25 per cent of 45 hours ? Christ, 9 hours ! That's a hell of a long time spent 'saving time' ! There must be a better way of getting from A to B. By bus ? OK, let's make buses. But what about the pollution and that? What about those electric cars they showed on the telly once? Etc., etc.

He envisages another month of discussion and research in complexly cross-cutting groups, until the workers reach a consensus lor eventual self-redeployment for making products which the workers consider to be socially useful. These include car refurbishing to increase the use-value of models already on the road), buses, overhead monorail cars, electric cars and scooters, white bicycles for communal use (as devised by the Amsterdam provos), housing units, minimal work for drop-outs, and for kids and old people who like to make themselves useful. But he sees other aspects of the workers' take-over, voluntary extra work for example: 'As work becomes more and more pleasurable, as technology and society develop to allow more and more craft aspects to return at high technological level, the idea of voluntary extra over the (reduced) fixed working week becomes feasible. Even the fixing of the working week becomes perseded.' The purpose of this voluntary extra? 'New Delhi needs buses, provide them by voluntary work.'The factory itself is open to the

community, including children; -thus every factory worker is a potential "environmental studies" instructor, if a child comes up and asks him how something works.' The factory in fact becomes a university, an institute of learning rather than of enforced stupidity, 'using men to a millionth of their capacities' as Norbert Weiner put it.

The evolution and transformation of the factory envisaged by Keith Paton leads us back to the idea of the Community Workshop envisaged in the previous chapter. We tend to think of the motor industry, for example, as one in which iron ore comes in at one end and a complete car rolls out at the other (though the purchaser of a 'Friday car' in today's society had better watch out, for that car rolled off the assembly line when the workers were waiting for their real life at the weekend to begin). But in fact two thirds of the factory value of a car is represented by components bought by the manufacturers from outside suppliers. The motor industry, like many others, is an assembly industry. The fact that this is so of most consumer goods industries, coupled with the modern facts of widely distributed industrial skill and motive power, means that, as the Goodman brothers said in *Communitas*:

'In large areas of our operation, we could go back to old-fashioned domestic industry with perhaps even a gain in efficiency, for small power is everywhere available, small machines are cheap and ingenious, and there are asy means to collect machined parts and centrally assemble them.'

But it also means that we could locally assemble them. It already happens on the individual spare-time level. Build-it-yourself radio, record-playing, and television

kits are a commonplace, and you can also buy assemble-it-yourself cars and refrigerators. Groups of community workshops could combine for bulk ordering of components, or for sharing according to their capacity the production of components for mutual exchange and for local assembly. The new industrial field of plastics (assuming that in a transformed future society, people find it a genuine economy to use them) offer many unexploited possibilities for the community workshop. There are three main kinds of plastics today: thermosetting resins which are moulded under heat with very high pressures and consequently require plant which is at present expensive and complex; thermoplastics, which are shaped by extrusion and by injection moulding (there are already do-it-yourself electric thermoplastic injection machines on the market); and polyester resins, used in conjunction with reinforcing materials like glass fibre which can be moulded at low pressures by simple contact moulding, and are thus eminently suitable for the potentialities of the community workshop.

As we are frequently reminded by our own experience as consumers, industrial products in our society are built for a limited life as well as for an early obsolescence. The products which are available for purchase are not the products which we would prefer to have. In a worker-controlled society it would not be worth the workers' while to produce articles with a deliberately limited life, nor to make things which were unrepairable. Products would have transparency of operation and repair. When Henry Ford first marketed his Model T he aimed at a product which 'any hick up a dirt road' could repair with a hammer and a spanner. He nearly bankrupted his firm in the process, but this is precisely the kind of product

which an anarchist society would need: objects whose functioning is transparent and whose repair can be undertaken readily and simply by the user. In his book *The Worker in an Affluent Society*, Ferdynand Zweig makes the entertaining observation that 'quite often the worker comes to work on Monday worn out from his weekend activities, especially from "Do-it-yourself"'. Quite a number said that the weekend is the most trying and exacting period of the whole week, and Monday morning in the factory, in comparison, is relaxing ' This leads us to ask - not in the future, but in our present society - what is work and what is leisure if we work harder in our leisure than at our work? The fact that one of these jobs is paid and the other is not seems almost fortuitous. And this in turn leads us to a further question.

The paradoxes of contemporary capitalism mean that there are vast numbers of what one American economist calls no-people: the army of the unemployed who are either unwanted by, or who consciously reject, the meaningless mechanised slavery of contemporary industrial production. Could they make a livelihood for themselves today in the community workshop ? If the workshop is conceived merely as a social service for 'creative leisure' the answer is that it would probably be against the rules. Members might complain that so-and-so was abusing the facilities provided by using them 'commercially'. But if the workshop were conceived on more imaginative lines than any existing venture of this kind, its potentialities could become a source of livelihood in the truest sense. In several of the New Towns in Britain, for example, it has been found necessary and desirable to build groups of small workshops for individuals and small businesses engaged in such work as repairing electrical equipment or car

bodies, woodworking and the manufacture of small components. The Community Workshop would be enhanced by its cluster of separate workplaces for 'gainful' work.

Couldn't the workshop become the community factory, providing work or a place for work for anyone in the locality who wanted to work that way, not as an optional extra to the economy of the affluent society which rejects an increasing proportion of its members, but as one of the prerequisites of the worker-controlled economy of the future? Keith Paton again, in a far-sighted pamphlet addressed to members of the Claimants' Union, urged them not to compete for meaningless jobs in the economy which has thrown them out as redundant, but to use their skills to serve their own community. (One of the characteristics of the affluent world is that it denies its poor the opportunity to feed, clothe, or house themselves, or to meet their own and their families' needs, except from grudgingly doled out welfare payments). He explains that:

When we talk of 'doing our own thing' we are not advocating going back to doing everything by hand. This would have been the only option in the thirties. But since then electrical power and 'affluence' have brought a spread of intermediate machines, some of them very sophisticated, to ordinary working class communities. Even if they do not own them (as many claimants do not) the possibility exists of borrowing them from neighbours, relatives, ex-workmates. Knitting and sewing machines, power tools and other do-it-yourself equipment comes in this category. Garages can be converted into little workshops, home-brew kits are popular, parts and machinery can be taken from old cars

and other gadgets. If they saw their opportunity, trained metallurgists and mechanics could get into advanced scrap technology, recycling the metal wastes of the consumer society for things which could be used again regardless of whether they would fetch anything in a shop. Many hobby enthusiasts could begin to see their interests in a new light.

'We do', he affirms, 'need each other and the enormous pool of energy and morale that lies untapped in every ghetto, city district and estate.' The funny thing is that when we discuss the question of work from an anarchist point of view, the first question people ask is: What would you do about the lazy man, the man who will not work? The only possible answer is that we have all been supporting him for centuries. The problem that faces every individual and every society is quite different, it is how to provide people with the opportunity they yearn for: the chance to be useful.

## ANARCHY IN MILTON KEYNES

Everyone has their own definition of anarchism. One I find generally useful is the first three paragraphs of the article Peter Kropotkin was asked to write for the 11 th edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica in 1905. This is the collection of volumes which (however repugnant we now find its sales techniques) is the place we look for a working definition of most things.

Kropotkin's first paragraph said that:

ANARCHISM (from the Greek, contrary to authority), is the name given to a principle or theory of life and conduct under which society is conceived without government - harmony in such a society being obtained, not by submission to law, or by obedience to any authority, but by free agreements concluded between the various groups, territorial and professional, freely constituted for the sake of production and consumption, as also for the satisfaction of the infinite variety of needs and aspirations of a civilised being.

That's his first paragraph, and of course he has the usual problem of anyone writing an encyclopaedia definition, he has to be concise, but at the same time, to bring everything in. So his second paragraph goes:

In a society developed on these lines, the voluntary associations which already now begin to cover all the fields of human activity would take a still greater extension so as to substitute themselves for the State in all its functions. They would represent an interwoven network, composed of an infinite variety of groups and federations of all sizes and degrees, local, regional, national and international - temporary or more or less

permanent - for all possible purposes: production, consumption and exchange, communications, sanitary arrangements, education, mutual protection, defence of the territory, and so on; and, on the other side, for the satisfaction of an ever increasing number of scientific, artistic, literary and sociable needs."

Kropotkin was a scientist, a physical geographer in origin, and his third paragraph drew an analogy from physics and from biology, and you might even claim from structural mechanics and music. For he claimed that:

Moreover, such a society would represent nothing immutable. On the Contrary - as is seen in organic life at large - harmony would (it is contended) result from an ever-changing adjustment and readjustment of equilibrium between the multitudes of forces and influences, and this adjustment would be the easier to obtain as none of the forces would enjoy a special protection from the State.

These opening remarks express the kernel of his argument for society as opposed to the State, and for the community as opposed to the government.

## SOCIETY OR THE STATE

The next stage in the argument for me, at least, was provided by the philosopher Martin Buber, who wasn't an anarchist, although he had strong anarchist connections. He was the friend and executor of a German anarchist Gustav Landauer, who made a very profound remark, which I quote from Buber's book Paths

in Utopia (Routledge, 49). "The state", said Landauer, "is not something which can be destroyed by a revolution, but is a condition, a certain relationship between human beings, a mode of human behaviour; we destroy it contracting other relationships, by behaving differently." Buber wrote a brilliant essay called 'Society and the State' which was printed in English in the long-dead journal *World Review* in 1951, and printed in a book of his called *Pointing the Way*.

Buber begins by making a clear distinction between the social principle and the political principle, pointing out that "it is inherent in social structures that people either find themselves already linked with one another in an association based on a common need or a common interest, or that they band themselves together for such a purpose, whether in an existing or a newly-formed society." And he then goes on to stress his agreement with the American sociologist Robert MacIver, that "to identify the social with the political is to be guilty of the grossest of all confusions, which completely bars any understanding of either society or the state".

The political principle for Buber, just as for Kropotkin, is characterised by power, authority, hierarchy, dominion. He sees the social principle wherever people link themselves in the pursuit of a common need or interest. Then he has a very interesting flash of understanding, which I see endlessly illustrated in contemporary politics. What is it, Buber asks, that gives the political principle its ascendancy? His answer was: "The fact that every people feels itself threatened by the others gives the State its definite unifying power; it depends upon the instinct of self preservation of society itself; the latent external crisis enables it to get the upper hand in internal

crises ... All forms of government have this in common: each possesses more power than is required by the given conditions; in fact, this excess in the capacity for making dispositions is actually what we understand by political power. The measure of this excess which cannot, of course, be computed precisely, represents the exact differences between administration and government." Buber calls this excess the "political surplus" and he observes that "its justification derives from the external and internal instability, from the latent state of crisis between nations and within every nation. The political principle is always stronger in relation to the social principle than the given conditions require. The result is a continuous diminution in social spontaneity."

### NEIGHBOURHOOD AND ASSOCIATION

I find this a devastating perception. And I think that a whole lot of people have always had an instinctive feeling that if any community can't organise itself, it is going to find governmental bodies filling the vacuum. There has been at least sixty years of effort to establish local community associations as voluntary, democratic, all-embracing bodies able to become unifying influences in every locality. These efforts are reported in a new book called *Enterprising Neighbours: the development of the Community Association movement* published this year by the National Federation of Community Associations. David Donnison provides an interesting introduction welcoming the honesty of this history because its approach to several questionable assumptions that a whole lot of worthy grassroots organisers take for granted, primarily the idea that "people want to spend

their time making friends with neighbours rather than because they have shared interests".

We can define the two possibilities as communities of propinquity and communities of interest. In practice plenty of us belong, for different reasons, to both, fulfilling Kropotkin's aspirations to "an interwoven network, composed of an infinite variety of groups and federations of all sizes and degrees" and so on. Students of the social problems that were said to arise in the vast new out-of town housing estates of the inter-war years, like Dagenham outside London or Wythenshawe outside Manchester, were apt to attribute them to the fact that huge new settlements of people who were strangers to each other found themselves living together in places without the familiar community facilities of the places they had come from, and thought that what was needed was a programme of community building.

The lessons were supposed to have been learned in the post-war programmes of New Towns which culminated with Milton Keynes. In practice the stop/go financing of the New Towns all through the fifties, sixties and seventies meant that the aspirations for synchronising new housing, new industry and social and community facilities seldom really happened as planned and as described in the publicity material. But I do think it is fair to say that the money invested in most of the New Towns on the funding of community facilities, including paying the salaries of people described as Community Development Officers or some similar title, was well spent, and contrasts favourably with the experience of the post-war versions of those pre-war out of town housing estates which we all know about: the places where we love to see television films of the blowing-up

by public authorities (not anarchists) of tower blocks which won't have been paid for until the early 21st century.

All the same, the worthy citizens who organise local community associations, whom we all know, when they pause and reflect on their labours, talk wistfully of the apathy and indifference of the people all around. They are not angry, they are just regretful that other people don't live up to a particular idea of society and community based on propinquity. It makes me ponder yet again, not only on the very significant observation I have quoted to you from Professor Donnison, but on Kropotkin's aspirations for an anarchist society.

### MILTON KEYNES AND MUSIC

This is why I need to tell you about my discovery of anarchy, in Kropotkin's sense, in Milton Keynes. It is because I have been reading, with very great pleasure, the book *The Hidden Musicians: music-making in an English town* by Ruth Finnegan, published last year by Cambridge University Press. She is an anthropologist from the Open University, so the particular English town she describes is Milton Keynes. The immense advantage of her ethnographical approach is that she refrains from making those value assumptions about music that most people automatically assume. As we all know, people talk about 'serious' music, meaning the music they take seriously, and implying that all other music is somehow frivolous.

Professor Finnegan has, I am sure, her own musical preferences, but she does not allow them to intrude on

her study of music-making. I am reminded of Mark Twain's quip that "Wagner's music isn't really half as bad as it sounds".

The Elm Groovers perform at Milton Keynes

Salvation Army bands, the Sherwood Sinfonia, the families dressing up for the Country and Western night, church choirs, the Morris Men and a hundred rock groups are all music, and when you consider the people hiring venues, arranging gigs, negotiating with visiting soloists, drawing up programmes, ferrying their children to rehearsals and carting tons of equipment around, let alone packing in the audiences, you realise that a vast and hitherto unrecorded proportion of the population anywhere is directly involved in the activity of music-making. In fact you feel that the whole population in one way or another is indirectly involved.

This is a remarkable social fact: that music-making is, more than anything else you can think of quickly, the cement of society, the expression of that social spontaneity that Buber was looking for, the most immediate and accessible example of Kropotkin's vision of the highest development of voluntary association in all its aspects, in all possible degrees, for all imaginable aims; ever changing, ever modified associations which carry in themselves the elements of their durability and constantly assume new forms which answer best to the multiple aspirations of all."

Professor Finnegan manages to sweep aside endless assumptions: the sociologists' preoccupation with class, the distinctions we make between professional and amateur, and, above all, ideas about musical exclusiveness. The same busy performers can find

themselves in a brass band one night, in a symphony orchestra another, and in an ad hoc jazz group at the weekend. This is the fluidity of involvement in changing communities that attracted Buber and Kropotkin. It's nice to think that a valuable element of the community quotient of any society, East or West, can be expressed in terms of the sheer number of young people endlessly practising for their big performances in a local pub under the self deprecating group names they choose (Ruth Finnegan lists more than a hundred, of which a mild example is 'Typical Shit'). This is the backhanded way in which shared enthusiasms hold communities together.

Let us take a look at some of the interlocking, mutually supportive communities that her book describes, seeing them as a measure of the community content of Milton Keynes.

### THE MUSIC SUBCULTURE

She notes how we have a socially defined canon of 'classical music' epitomised by varying combinations of professional players, live, broadcast and recorded, which "implicitly moulded people's views of music" but "there was also a whole grass-roots sub-culture of local classical music. Though perhaps 'invisible' to most scholars, in practice this was the essential local manifestation of the national music system ... one aspect was the provision of audiences with the necessary skills of appreciation for professionals coming to give concerts locally, but it extended far beyond this to the whole system of local training, playing, actively practising musical groups and public performances by local musicians."

One concrete example of this continuing tradition is the way in which printed scores and music parts, both vocal and instrumental, get passed on: "These were often borrowed rather than bought and when a local choir, say, found itself, as so often, singing from old and well-marked copies, it was easy to picture the earlier choirs 20, 30 or even 50 years ago singing from the self same copies - and repertoire - of classical choral music in the day when, perhaps, those parts cost just one penny."

In Milton Keynes, as in anywhere else, the classical music tradition rests on highly trained specialist musicians, so it can be seen as a "high-art pursuit for the few". But looking a little closer, Ruth Finnegan sees that local musicians "varied enormously in terms of educational qualifications, specialist expertise, occupation, wealth and general ethos." Take the leading amateur orchestra, the Sherwood Sinfonia, where she found exceptions to the usual assumptions, "like the young sausage-maker, later music shop assistant, who besides being a Sherwood Sinfonia violinist was a keyboard player and composer with a local rock group, or pupils from local comprehensive schools not all in the 'best' areas."

Take too the Brass Band world. Don't be deceived by the way that people imply that that sector is 'a world of its own' confined to families where it had become a tradition. There is endless evidence of this in the tradition of Salvation Army bands, works bands or Boys' Brigade bands, but we're all familiar with great and famous performers who belonged as much to the allegedly incompatible groupings of the dance band, jazz group or symphony orchestra. In Milton Keynes, Ruth

Finnegan found that no other musical groups, except possibly a few church choirs, had such solid links, sometimes actual instruments and sheet music from long before the new city was conceived: from the Woburn Sands Band of 1867, the Wolverton Town and Railway Band of 1908 or the Bletchley Boys' Brigade Bugle Band of 1928. By the 1980s the constituents of, say, the Stantonbury Brass or the Bletchley Band and the new Broseley Brass had members of both sexes and all ages. Ruth Finnegan was assured that their political commitments were across the whole spectrum and the people involved included postmen, teachers, telephone engineers, motor mechanics, personnel managers, butchers, train drivers, clerks, labourers, storemen and shopworkers, "but also included computer engineers, a building inspector, a midwife and several schoolchildren".

Forget your assumptions: the brass band world was more representative of class and occupation in Milton Keynes than any political group. And exactly the same was found to be true of the folk music world. One of the things she observed in local folk clubs was their relative transience: "There were others too, even less long-lasting, which for a time engaged people's enthusiasm but faded out after a few years or months ..." like the Concrete Cow Folk Club. One leading singer at the Black Horse in Great Linford explained that "anybody's welcome to join in, play along, sing a song, add some harmony to a chorus or simply have a beer and listen".

## CHANGE AND VARIETY

This is a reminder of Kropotkin's important stress on impermanence, and his insistence on "an infinite variety of groups ... temporary or more or less permanent ... an ever-changing adjustment and readjustment of equilibrium". In the brass world we emphasise the continuity of tradition, in the folk world we love the way in which the mood and the venue change from pub to pub. I see, where I live in Suffolk, how as the venue changes, performers, some of them old friends, others complete strangers, adjust to the mood, the audience and the acoustics, and play along together, sometimes accompanying a singer none of them have met before, exchanging through gestures and eye-signals information about key and tempo, chords and harmony. It is exactly the same automatic reciprocity that you notice between the members of a string quartet, with the significant difference that people like the Amadeus had played together for forty years.

When the whole variegated patchwork of the folkweave pattern comes together, as in the Folk-on-the-Green Festival in Stony Stratford, they provide, as Ruth Finnegan comments, "a magnificent showpiece of local talent" bringing in other streams like Ceilidh bands to dance to, or the Morns-dancing groups. As one adherent told her, "by playing with other people you get another dimension to performance".

Then she moves to the world of music theatre, meaning opera, the Gilbert and Sullivan light operas, musical plays - not so much 'Oklahoma' or 'West Side Story' as local groups could never afford the copyright fees involved, but old favourites and, for example, the series of musical plays based on local history which emerged on the Stantonbury Campus, one of which I have

actually seen. It also covers the pantomimes put on at Christmas by every kind of group from schools to Women's Institutes.

If your measure of the importance of music in human society is the sheer number of people involved in the actual production, music theatre must be the winner. Among performers it brings together both singers and actors, and it also calls for the utmost skill in scene designers, lighting electricians, painters and stage-hands, costume makers, and an enormous number of citizens involved in getting people to rehearsals, feeding and bedding them, booking halls, producing programmes, drumming up the audience and selling tickets. Many such ventures were conducted to raise funds for local causes, and Ruth Finnegan is eloquent about the meaning for the participants

...local soloists flourished and even the less skilled chorus and small-part singers expanded, steeped in music for hours on end, attending constant rehearsals, studying their parts in every odd moment they could snatch from work or family - small wonder that one concluded 'I ate, slept and dreamt music'. Some members had before had relatively little systematic musical experience, and for them such experience would be a revelation - as for the local plumber unable to read notated music who talked and talked of the joy of singing in operas and pantomimes and his discovery of the beauties of listening to music. For their regular audiences too, the public performances were not only grand occasions of theatrical display, marked by colour, movement, dance and dramatic as well as musical expression, but also an opportunity to hear well-known tunes and arrangements which even after the end of that

year's performance could remain in the memory to evoke that special experience and lay the foundation for looking forward to next year's production."

### FLUIDITY AND MOVEMENT

Then there's the jazz world. The three best-known bands playing in Milton Keynes in the early 1980s were the Original Grand Union Syncopators, the Fenny Stompers and the T-Bone Boogie Band. Dr Finnegan discusses these three with a brief mention of dozens of others in the area. These groups won a huge reputation locally, with wildly unexpected combinations of performers and instruments. Talking of the T-Bone Boogie Band, she explains that "they presented themselves as a zany 'fun band', but their act followed many traditional jazz and blues sequences, with beautiful traditional playing interspersed with their own wilder enactments of blues. They spoke of these as 'improvised out of nowhere, on the spur of the moment', but they were in practice based on long hours of jamming together as a group." She goes on to say that "they saw themselves as 'a community band', playing 'to give other people enjoyment ... and for our own enjoyment as well', a hobby rather than professional enterprise. When they were approached by a recording company and offered money to go professional, they turned it down."

Her account of the fluidity of the jazz groups sounds like Kropotkin describing his ideal society. She sees the actual instrumental composition of jazz groups as "more variable than in most other musical worlds" and that "jazz musicians were tied neither to written forms nor to exact memorisation, but rather engaged in a form of

composition-in-performance following accepted stylistic and thematic patterns".

For them, jazz was freedom, as compared with either classical music or rock. She says that "far more than other musicians they would break into smiles of recognition or admiration as one after another player took up the solo spot, and looked at each other in pleasure after the end of a number, as if having experienced something newly created as well as familiar. As one local jazz player put it, 'we improvise, with the tunes used as vehicles, so everything the group does is original'. Local jazz musicians often belonged to several jazz bands, moving easily between different groups ... jazz in Milton Keynes is more a series of venues than an integrated and self conscious musical world ... and both the musical activity itself, and the shared skills, pride and conventions that constituted jazz playing seemed to be a continuing element in their own identity and their perceptions of others."

### DISSENT AND CO-OPERATION

Then she moves to the country and western world, describing the Milton Keynes Divided Country and Western Club, going strong in Bletchley since the mid 1970s. The club's name, she says, indicated certain options. One of these was in dress: 'divided' between those who chose to come dressed 'just as you like' and those who preferred 'western dress'. Either was acceptable, and around half had opted for one or another version of 'western' gear which could range from a token cowboy hat or scarf or to the full regalia. "In contrast to rock and jazz events," she explains, "the audience sitting

round the tables was family based, with roughly equal numbers of men and women, several children, and people of every age from the twenties upwards, including middle-aged and elderly people; only the late teenagers were absent. It was a 'family night out' ... the secretary welcomed individual visitors from other clubs to interest and smiles from his listeners - an established custom in country and western clubs, in keeping with their general atmosphere of friendliness and personal warmth".

She makes it sound almost like a meeting of a religious sect like the Shakers in nineteenth century America: "As the evening went on, more and more people got up to dance, adding to and developing the music through their rhythmic movements in the dance - one of the age-old modes of musical expression and appreciation. The atmosphere was relaxed and unselfconscious. and most people whatever their age, sex or build looked remarkably carefree as they danced to the band - the middle-aged woman with her tight jeans, jersey and big leather belt over her well-rounded bulges, the visiting technician and grandfather with his broken smoke-stained teeth, gleaming gun and cowboy gear, the young wife out for the evening with her husband, drawn in by his general interest in country and western music and now sharing his enthusiasm - and scores of others."

The country and western world was a co-existence of people interested in the 'western' aspects and those who most valued the music. This co-existence was summed up in the very name of the Milton Keynes Divided Country and Western Club, which as Dr Finnegan says, at first sight suggests dissension, but in practice symbolises fruitful co-operation and an ultimate sharing

of interests between these wings of the country and western world.

She moves on to another musical scene, rock and pop, a catch-all phrase since meanings and definitions are always shifting with what Derek Jewell calls the continual flux of the vocabulary of popular fashion. Dr Finnegan describes how "Milton Keynes was swarming with rock and pop bands. They were performing in the pubs and clubs, practising in garages, youth clubs, church halls and school classrooms, advertising for new members in the local papers and lugging their instruments around by car or on foot. There were probably about 100 groups, each with their own colourful names and brand of music ... From the amount of time, trouble and (in many cases) money the players invested in their music, and from their own comments, it was clear that they got great social and personal satisfaction from their band membership - 'making people listen to what you say' and 'finding a way to express ourselves' - rather than regarding it primarily as a profitable enterprise ... The players' ages, educational backgrounds and occupation were more varied than most of the generalisations about modern rock music and youth culture might suggest."

She is greatly sceptical about the succession of scholarly writings about mass culture, one influential group seeing it as "essentially ruled by the market place, soporific and non-artistic, delivered by non-creative and commercialised performers to passive and brainwashed mass audiences," another group of Marxist critics seeing it as dominated by a capitalist power elite, while yet another declares that it is a "cultural struggle" with "the working class struggling to assert their own radical

claims against the capitalist world" - a form of working-class youth protest.

These views obviously aren't convincing when applied to "the amateur grass-roots local performers and their face-to-face audiences," but all the same, "local participants and observers were still to some extent affected by this series of assumptions and were prepared from time to time to make effective use of such images as their own publicity".

Her own conclusion is that "the most prominent single characteristic of rock players in Milton Keynes - apart from their variety - was their interest in expressing their own views and personality through music-making: a stress on individuality and artistic creation which accords ill with the mass theorists' delineation of popular music". A striking feature she saw running through all the bands was a sense of personal pride and achievement. Her final word on them was that in such bands "their members felt they could really make some individual mark ... in contrast to the hierarchies and insecurities of school, work or the social services, playing in a band provided a medium where players could express their own personal aesthetic vision and through their music achieve a sense of controlling their own values, destiny and self identity."

## CREATIVITY

She goes on to discuss the processes by which musicians in Milton Keynes learned the techniques of their art, the nature of performances. Whether the performance was seen as an 'engagement', a 'concert', a 'recital', a 'booking'

or a 'gig', there were several forms of social organisation required: "mechanisms to frame the occasion as somehow apart, prior preparation by organisers, and the crucial presence of an audience, not just as passive recipients but as active and experienced participants themselves playing an essential role in constituting the occasion as a musical event". Then she moves to an analysis of composition, creativity and performance. A lot of musical composition happens in Milton Keynes in several ways. "The first is the well-known classical mode of prior-written composition by an individual. This mode is assumed to be the natural form of 'composition' in most serious writing about music." A lot of that happens here, like the work of John Dankworth, working nationally and internationally, not primarily through local musical networks. There's a lot of church composition, hymns and carols, and a lot of music written for local school music festivals, or for the big music dramas from the Stantonbury drama group.

But there are other models of composition which, she sees, "overlap and mutually enrich each other". And she concludes that "once one understands the validity of differing systems for creating original music, each autonomous in its own terms, it becomes clear that there is indeed a remarkable amount of musical creativity and the grass roots. In all forms of music, but perhaps most strikingly of all in the prior-composition-through practice of rock groups, the local musicians are quite consciously and deliberately among the modernday musical composers."

## PLURALISM AND COMMITMENT

I have quoted at length from Dr Finnegan's account of the different musical worlds of Milton Keynes. She is well aware that there are others too. There's the big range of Irish music, both associated with groups like the Erin Singers and the Green Grass Social Club as well as the St Patrick's Day Mass of the Milton Keynes Irish Society. Or there's the Austrian, Swiss and German music at the Bletchley Edelweiss Club, or the Milton Keynes Welsh Society, or the Hindu Youth Organisation that celebrated the Diwali Festival, or the Buddhist group associated with the Peace Pagoda, or the musical traditions of the Sikh community and the Muslim population, each with their own musical traditions. Or the Milton Keynes Pipe and Drum Band or the celebration of the Chinese New Year with dragon and drum beat. She stresses once again that "in the limited sense in which the metaphor of 'musical world' is meaningful, there is a plurality of such worlds in local music-making."

Then she examines the home, the school and the churches, clubs and pubs, not only as the physical places for music making, but as providing "a complex of expected roles and opportunities for music" which continues year after year. After all "music does not just happen `naturally' in any society, but has to have its recognised time and place, its organisation of personnel, resources, and physical locations". And she has two chapters, one called `Working at it' and another on `Small working bands', which illustrate the huge time and effort that vast numbers of people, a much wider group than actual performers, put into making music happen. Once more, I can't resist quoting from the book at length:

Not surprisingly some groups were more effective than others in attracting the necessary personnel, coping with the various constraints, and more or less meeting their participants' aspirations, but even the smallest of them - the precarious church choir of four members as much as the 90-strong Milton Keynes Chorale - ultimately depended on the ordered commitment of its participants: without that none could continue.

When one thinks of local music, then, the correct impression should not be either of the 'cultural desert' that some picture, or of a set of smartly operated and highly efficient groups, or yet of the natural co-operation of communally oriented or selfless individuals, but rather a variegated landscape made up of a whole series of differing kinds of groups and activities, some tightly organised, visible and populous, others more informal, some struggling or on their last legs, some starting up and perhaps benefiting from the dissolution of others, some established but still vulnerable, some in direct competition with other groups at some times but joining in co-operative ventures at others, some lasting over the years, and some appearing for just one or two events then lapsing. In the rich tapestry that makes up local music, what all these groups and activities have in common-whether large or small, 'successful' or not, harmonious or quarrelsome or mixed - is the need for a constant input of organised co-ordinated effort from those who at one level or another participate in them.

Now where have you seen this kind of language before? Well precisely in Kropotkin's definition of anarchism with which I began. Just to complete the saga, I will quote &om Ruth Finnegan's next paragraph.

"Many of the pictures we are given of cultural activity in this country rest on a top-down model (patronage coming from the state or the large commercial concerns) or on a model of culture, and more specifically music, as essentially and ideally the preserve of specialists or as primarily conducted through the mass media or large-scale professional concerts. Local music-making falls easily within none of these models. Nor does it fit the also common idea that amateur cultural activities are somehow natural, easy and carefree, costing nothing and outside the normal sphere of those who are interested in organisational processes. On the contrary, the organisational processes of effective work, decision making, communication, choice between alternative methods of achieving objectives, delegation of responsibilities and, above all, co-operation in the attaining of more or less agreed ends can all be found in the processes of running local amateur music - indeed they must be found there if it is to continue."

My claim is that this book encapsulates a marvellous piece of research, described with great sensitivity, and beautifully written. Yet nearly everyone I know in Milton Keynes has never heard of this book published last year, and the one who had heard of it said, correctly, that it was so ludicrously expensive (£35) that he could never dream of buying it. I myself have never seen it reviewed anywhere, yet I see it as the most enlightening piece of anthropological or sociological research that I have read for years. Obviously the price has nothing to do with any wishes of the author.

Yet if I were the marketing manager of the Cambridge University Press I would have instantly seen the opportunities of a paperback run-on, on newsprint if it's

any cheaper, of several thousand copies with big lettering on the cover saying 'Music in Milton Keynes: the truth at last', and I would have touted it around every bookshop and newsagent in Bletchley, Stoney Stratford, Wolverton and central Milton Keynes, and would find that vast number of citizens would want to buy it, if only because on the evidence of this book a very big proportion of the people who live there are involved in one or another of these plural worlds of music in Milton Keynes.

### THE LESSONS

I've just referred to a failure in marketing, and this gives me the chance to draw an obvious implication from this book. For ten years we have been lectured by our rulers about the virtues of the market economy, the alleged magic of the market, and this by a clever propaganda trick has been described as the enterprise culture. Now enterprise has nothing to do with making a profit by buying cheap and selling dear. In the very last paragraph of her magnificent book Ruth Finne reflects that "the reality of human beings is to be found not only (maybe not mainly) in their paid employment or even their thought, but also in their engagement in recognised cultural practices ... Among the most valued and, it maybe, most profoundly human of such practices in our society is that of music".

If my purpose was just to write about her book, that is where I would end. But I want you to reflect on what an interesting world we would be living in if we organised everything the way we organise our music. I mentioned Martin Buber's perception of the social principle as what

happens wherever people "link themselves in the pursuit of a common need or interest" and Kropotkin's concept of this kind of voluntary co-operation as a social structure which would "represent nothing immutable. On the contrary - as is seen in organic life at large" he went on " - harmony would result from an ever-changing adjustment and readjustment of equilibrium between the multitude of forces and influences", but above all, "would represent an interwoven network, composed of an infinite variety of groups and federations of all sizes ... temporary or more or less permanent - for all possible purposes."

Suppose this was the way we chose to organise our work, or our education or the production and management of housing, or our health services, or our transport, or any of the things that make life possible and enjoyable in Milton Keynes or anywhere else?

## GARDENING

Wander into any bookshop in any high street and you will find an endless stream of books on two topics: cooking and gardening. Even though everyone cooks and though gardening is this country's most popular outdoor pastime, it is evident that many of these books are read not for instruction on food preparation or cultivation instructions but for sheer pleasure. Now if anyone deserved the epithet 'armchair gardener' it is me. I am the world's worst, or most erratic gardener (though fortunately all my neighbours are very good practical ones). But I am fascinated by the social history and sociology of gardening, and I notice that all through the history of garden literature the modest instruction manuals are full of political assumptions.

Candide, the hero of Voltaire's nice little book of that name, was unable to agree with his instructor Dr. Pangloss that we live in the best of all possible worlds, but concluded that, whatever else happens, we must go and work in the garden. His famous remark is often taken to imply a withdrawal from political issues, and half a century ago George Orwell reported that when he chanced in his column in Tribune to mention his pleasure from the sixpenny rambler roses he bought at Woolworth's, he got an indignant letter from a reader who said that roses are bourgeois. He found that other readers, too, assumed that "any pleasure in the actual process of life encourages a sort of political quietism".

Gardening writers tend not to be supporters of the political left. One exception was the celebrated Dr. Harry Roberts, famous as a 'penny doctor' in the East End of London early in this century, who wrote a long series of

gardening books, and in his *Keep Fit in Wartime* of 1940 argued that "we must apply the old communist formula: to each according to his need, from each according to his ability".

Another was Edward Hyams, a pioneer vine-grower in England known to anarchists for his excellent, but posthumous, biography of Proudhon (*Pierre-Joseph Proudhon: His Revolutionary Mind and Works*, John Murray, 1979). His long series of garden books included *A History of Gardens and Gardening* (Dent, 1971) and *English Cottage Gardens* (Nelson, 1970; Penguin, 1987) in which he described how between 1760 and 1867 the English ruling class stole seven million acres of common land, the property and livelihood of the common people of England", which he called a "gigantic crime, by far the grandest larceny in England's history".

Since Hyams died (in Besancon in 1975) there has been a gap in left-wing garden literature, but it has been filled by a writer and gardener called Martin Hoyles who has produced a series of gardening histories which are pricey but desirable (this is why your local public library exists). The first was *The Story of Gardening* (Journeyman Press paperback, 1991, £12.95) where, in his very first sentences, he takes up Orwell's point:

"It comes as a shock to put the words politics and gardening together. Usually they are seen as two completely separate spheres. What can gardening have to do with politics? Gardening is surely an escape from politics and the garden is a refuge from harsh political realities."

He only cites this conventional wisdom in order to refute it, and his comprehensive history supports the view that

access to land is an intensely political issue. When I first read this book I noted that Hoyles has an index entry on "Politics, incompatible with gardening", and there's an obvious sense in which this is true. There is seldom time for both.

For example, when I talked to the hard-working secretary of the Birmingham Allotments Council, which federates more than 100 local societies, he ruefully explained that he had been obliged to give up his own plot, as negotiating with the city council's politicians and officers exhausted all his spare time. And it reflects my own garden neglect. With David Crouch, who is a better gardener than me, I wrote *The Allotment: Its Landscape and Culture* (Faber, 1988; Mushroom, 1994, but out of print again) and travelled the country talking to gardeners, while my own garden was taken over by thistles and nettles.

Martin Hoyles, on the other hand, has pursued his investigation of the history of garden literature in a pair of books. He has written a two-volume book on gardening books from 1560 to 1960. The first was *Gardeners Delight* (Pluto, 1994, £22.95), quickly followed by a second, just out, which is *Bread and Roses* (Pluto, 1995, £22.95). Both will be paperbacks sooner or later.

Having explored in his earlier book the social history of plant cultivation against the background of exploration, empire building and the horrors of the enclosure, he moves on to exploring the variety of pastoral idylls that motivate garden makers. In the first of these books he

classified over two thousand works, from sixteenth century herbals to admonitory wartime manuals for vegetable production. He gave special attention to the division of labour between master and man, mistress and serving-maid, with particular attention to efforts to ensure that children became gardeners, whether in family or school.

In the latest book, *Bread and Roses*, he examines a further series of themes in relation to the literature of gardening, from the disputes between royalists and their opponents in the seventeenth century onwards. He is, for example, careful to show how the English landscape garden of the eighteenth century, constructed to the designs of Capability Brown and repeated all through the period when the plutocracy was scattering off-the-peg country houses around Britain, was at the expense of the displaced poor. And he cites the opinion of another garden pundit of the time, Uvedale Price, whose motives were not of "libertarian outrage at the injustice that attended enclosure and the creation of extensive gardens", but were both aesthetic and political:

"In Capability Brown's designs Price sees 'something despotic in the general system of improvement - all must be laid open - all that obstructs levelled to the ground - houses, orchards, gardens, all swept away'. He condemns such tyranny, which 'for the sake of mere extent and parade of property, only extends the bounds of monotony, and of dreary selfish pride; but contracts those of variety, amusement and humanity'."

Hoyles pursues this egalitarian approach through the subsequent history of gardening in England, observing how the tradition was dependent upon an army of cheap

labour, and watching the consequent shift from "bedding-out" plants to herbaceous borders, as well as the twentieth century impact of the two world wars and the changing place of women in gardening. And he concludes by observing how "English gardening literature reflects the ethnocentrism of English culture in general".

Now this kind of study of the literature of gardening might have been seen as purely academic, but for the fact that scattered around Britain today there are people making token occupations of land and citing the printed opinions of the Digger, Gerard Winstanley, and the invasion of common land at St George's Hill in Surrey in April 1949, when the Council of State was informed by a local landowner that people were sowing the ground with parsnips, carrots and beans, with the intention of restoring "the ancient community enjoying the fruits of the earth".

Suddenly access to land has been put back on the political agenda, except among the politicians of right or left, except for the threat from the Criminal Justice Act. See, for example, John Rety's report in Freedom of 13th May 1995, 'Land is the big issue', which was echoed by sympathetic reports in the press from the Guardian on the left to the Daily Telegraph on the right.

It might even be that, just as farmers are claiming a subsidy for their 'set-aside' land, given on condition that they grow nothing, the claims of the landless for freedom to grow could be pushed back into the list of issues that actually involve people. Then the immense literature of gardening might actually become important.

**WHAT WILL ANARCHISM MEAN  
TOMORROW?  
A DIFFICULT QUESTION TO ANSWER**

([http://melior.univ-montp3.fr/ra\\_forum/en/ward\\_colin/index\\_e.html](http://melior.univ-montp3.fr/ra_forum/en/ward_colin/index_e.html))

At a party in Amsterdam to celebrate the 100th issue of De AS, which is an anarchist journal with the same format as THE RAVEN, (<http://www soi.city.ac.uk/~louise/raven.html>) I met a group of people intent on discussing the anarchist press. There were, for example, the group who produce De RAAF, the paper of the Amsterdam Federation of Anarchists, and those who still issue a bulletin called De Vrije Socialist, the title of a famous Dutch anarchist paper started in 1898. I thought I had escaped without making any of those rash promises we tend to give in a convivial atmosphere, but then I was cornered by a nice bunch of people who had just issued the 28th number of their anarchist quarterly Perspectief, from Ghent in Belgium. They wanted me to tell them my response to the question "What will anarchism mean tomorrow?" It is a topic I would be happy to evade, but, having been asked, this is what I have sent them.

To answer this question I have to begin with a series of propositions about the history of anarchism:

1. As a political ideology, anarchism was formulated in the 19th century by its founding fathers who, like those of other varieties of socialism - Marxist, Fabian, Social-Democratic - had an optimistic view of inevitable progress towards their goal. They all believed that the conquest of power by 'the people', whether through parliamentary means or through direct action in the

streets and factories or through armed struggle, would bring the changes they sought in society. In considering the failure of the anarchists to achieve this goal, we have to remember that bureaucratic state socialism of both social-democratic and Marxist types has failed too. Indeed, anarchists could claim that seventy years of experience of state socialism has delayed the socialist cause by a century.

2. The 19th century anarchists were unique in their rejection not only of capitalism but of the state itself. This was seen as proof that they were not to be taken seriously. Yet the whole history of the 20th century had justified them. It has been the century of total war, where the elimination of civilians has become accepted as the consequence of sophisticated weaponry, while the great powers have rivalled each other in selling the means of destruction to every little local dictator in the rest of the world. It has been the century in which mass extermination became the accepted policy of civilised states.

3. The 19th century anarchists looked forward confidently to popular revolutions that would open the way to what they saw as a 'free society'. Events were different. The Mexican revolution of 1911 resulted in the deaths and posthumous glorification of anarchist heroes like Zapata and Magon and the dominance for eighty years of the ironically-named Party of Revolutionary Institutions. The Russian revolution of 1917 resulted in the brutal suppression of the anarchists, and any other dissidents, by 1921 and then seventy years of Leninist-Stalinist dictatorship from which a new generation of anarchists have only recently emerged. The Spanish revolution of 1936 brought the suppression of the

anarchists long before the end of the civil war, and was followed by 35 years of Fascist dictatorship. How would Mexicans, Russians or Spaniards today respond to calls for revolution?

4. By the end of the 19th century some anarchists were beginning to formulate the doctrine of anarcho-syndicalism, seeking to turn every workshop dispute into a battle for control of the means of production. It denounced as a betrayal every agreement that the reformist trade unions won over wages, hours and conditions of work. The gains of the unions were written into the law in many countries. (In Franco's Spain as much as in social-democratic Sweden.) By the 1990s employers all over Europe are seeking to avoid the rules with the aim of reducing the cost of labour to that in Taiwan or Colombia. Every Ford worker knows that industrial militancy will result in the multi-national company moving production to another country. This issue is at the heart of the British government's abolition of minimum wage agreements, at the decision, as I write, of the Hoover company to shift production from France to England, and of the British government's rejection of the 'Social Protocol' of the EC Maastricht treaty, and it affects the future strategy of the political left including the anarchists.

5. The 19th century anarchists, like the whole of the left, assumed that nationalism was a superstition that the 20th century would outgrow. They thought the same about religious beliefs. The last thing that they or anyone else envisaged was the late 20th century rise of militant religious fundamentalism, whether Christian, Jewish, Islamic or Hindu. The result is that, like other non-religious, non-nationalistic people, we have no idea of

how to approach these unwelcome phenomena. Do we attack religious revivalism with the risk of feeding rather than reducing its divisive power? Or do we anarchists, hostile though we are to the state, find ourselves defending the secular state against those organised minorities who want to use it for their own purposes? This may not yet be an issue for us but it is an issue in the United States in defending the secular state against Born Again Christians or for anarchists in Israel defending the secular state against ultra-orthodox Judaism or for Egyptian anarchists defending the institutions of the secular state against Islamic fundamentalism or in India defending the secular state against Hindu extremism.

To my mind, these five propositions about the difference between the world of the anarchists at the end of the 19th and of the 20th centuries result in the need for a different style of anarchist propaganda at the dawn of the 21st century. Faced by the eclipse not merely of anarchism but of the mainstream of socialism I think it important to stress, as I did twenty years ago in the book *Anarchy in Action*, that anarchism is not a theory of utopia but a theory of organisation. I agree with Paul Goodman's remark that "A free society cannot be the substitution of a 'new order' for the old order; it is the extension of spheres of free action until they make up most of social life".

This belief automatically excludes me from the ranks of those who think in terms of mass revolutions (whose first victims, whether in China or Cuba. have been the anarchists) but it includes me among those who, in the useful polarity posed by Murray Bookchin, in social ecology rather than in deep ecology. I think that the new

support for anarchism in the 21st century will come not from Green parties but from the broader Green movement.

Inevitably the ideas of the 19th century anarchists were Eurocentric, even when they were brought to Japan, China and the cities of Latin America by students and immigrants. But one of the anarchist enlargements of the late 20th century is the contribution from a different style of anarchist thinking, with a different label, from the Sarvodaya movement in India and from the evolution of self-help self-employed settlements in Africa, South Asia and Latin America. The triumphs of the unofficial economy, keeping society going in the hopeless climate of South America in the face of a predatory ruling class and a military caste which shifts periodically into state terrorism, is now classified as basismo, a society which has to build itself from the base.

I believe that an intelligent 21st century anarchism will draw on its links with the worlds of the Green movement and with the unofficial and informal economies of the poor world, as well as those of the poor in the rich world, to draw anarchist lessons on human survival. I think that the lessons of the 20th century enhance the anarchist message, but that our language has to take account of new and complicated social order.

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