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OUR GENERATION

CITIES AGAINST CENTRALIZATION

Greg Bryant

THE CONVERGENCE OF ANARCHISM, FEMINISM & ECOLOGY

Thomas S. Martin

APPROPRIATE POWER

Mark Anderlik

FANATICS OF FREEDOM

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Volume 23, Number 2

OUR GENERATION

Volume 23, Number 2 Summer 1992

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Notes to the Reader

Along with the basic values of peace, justice, freedom and equality that stirred the Movement activists of the 1960s, there was one overriding concern which perhaps inspired their commitment beyond all others. It was the search for community. Community, as it was understood by the New Left, was an experience as well as a place, a shared political and social activism in open association with others who had similar ultimate concerns. By the end of the decade of the 1960s the sense of community of "the Movement" disintegrated once "old leftism" emerged along with a new "separatist sectarianism". The process of disintegration was fuelled first by a Black Power separatism and then accelerated by a series of other separatisms—Chicano, Native American, women's liberation and the ideology of feminist separatism, and finally, the development of gay liberation and its lesbian separatist wing. All of these new movements brought new issues, new vitality, and a new sense of selfhood to "progressive" politics, but none of them brought "the Movement" back together again. The particular quality of personal risk-taking and self-exposure that had attempted to build bridges and that had produced a movement which marched in the streets together was replaced by a series of separate movements which militarily asserted their identities but lost sight of the whole.

Two contrasting interpretations have emerged regarding the final devolution of the Movement of the 1960s. The majority voice argues that the development of a spectrum of successor movements catalyzed around issues of identity has been a healthy outcome. Another viewpoint argues that the separatist politics of identity that replaced the relative unity of the 1960s Movement has marked the demise of democratic radicalism as a force in politics in our society. The development of a divided movement, this second interpretation contends, has meant not only the substitution of divisive agendas for a radical political critique that might challenge corporate liberalism in the way the New Left once did. Since the demise of the New Left as organization as well as movement, there has not even been a political forum where the ideas of democratic radicalism could be debated

on an ongoing basis. Whichever school of thought is correct, a process of convergence is struggling to be born politically.

The principals of democratic radicalism that inspired the best of the New Left have spread everywhere in the last few decades. Whether it is the Greens or the workers and students of Beijing, the notion of grassroots democracy and ethical politics has gained ground in many societies. A commitment to the realization of these ideals through non-violence is a common theme as are the principles of feminism, gay liberation, and ecological awareness. These principles represent the merger in theory of an ecological and participatory-democratic politics that embody the best of the last few decades. This union, which was implicit in the Movement of the 1960s, would have continued to develop more easily if the New Left had not been torn apart by the separatist "politics of identity" and adventurous violence. The coalescing, grounded in self-conscious awareness, could have completed the new political paradigm that emerged. Be that as it may...

The power of this new politics, and its ability to capture the imagination of virtually a whole generation was built upon a vision of a planetary grassroots-democratic and an ecologically sane future based on the decentralization of power. One thing seems certain: the instinct of the young radicals of the New Left who framed the political debate in terms of an ethically-centered democratic political theory laid the basis for the new political discourse that will guide radical democratic experimentation in the next generation. It now remains for us to deepen its meaning and fulfil its promises.

The themes that permeate the essays in this issue of *Our Generation* are familiar enough to readers—understanding power and hence freedom; placing decentralization in context and thereby realizing the history of cities; and the ever increasing convergence of some of the cardinal ideas of our age. These themes are dealt with herein in new ways, with much persuasive argumentation.

Thus Thomas Martin writes an insightful and well conceived essay on the convergence of three great traditions and philosophies which fill the air; Greg Bryant presents us with an excellent overview of the evolution of community and the politics of dichotomy between centralism and decentralisation as manifested in the history of cities; and Mark Anderlik very ably, follows the symbiotic relationship between means and ends while also persuasively arguing how new liberated political spaces can be

transformed and defended. Finally, Amedeo Bertolo recalls for us some of the most important heritage of freedom while extending this tradition into the present debate. Far too often the contribution of anarchism is set aside by intellectual speculators; Bertolo remedies this tendency. While the essay does not give us the required institutional expressions that the practice of freedom must have today, the other contributors to this issue of the journal compliment this opening.

Earlier this year, we wrote to our subscribers asking for donations to help us overcome the limitations we suffered due to computer problems. The response to our financial appeal, notwithstanding these very difficult economic times for all of us, was heartening. From Japan to Europe, donations and sympathetic letters came in to give us a hand to carry on with our mutual work. Again thank you.

In Memoriam

Hersh (Harry) Rapoport Nov. 2, 1933—May 28, 1992

We have come together today to celebrate the life of a man who—I think all of you knew him would agree—was quite an exceptional human being. Hersh' was short for Hershey, which in Jewish means deer—that gentle and beautiful member of the animal kingdom. He was born Nov. 2, 1933 of Lily and Israel Rapoport, who had immigrated to Canada in the 1920s. His mother came from a village in the Ukraine. His father was from that part of the Austro-Hungarian empire then known as Galicia.

His father was a tailor. Most of his father's family were destroyed during the Holocaust. His mother helped support the family as a seamstress. Her specialty was sewing linings in fur coats. (At the time, Montreal was the centre of a thriving Canadian fur industry.) She worked in factories, and later in her home. When Hersh's father became too ill with leukaemia to work, she became the family's sole support. Hersh had a brother, Max, born four years earlier. When the boys were still quite young, they helped their mother by delivering finished fur coats from their home on Urbain St. to fur manufacturers downtown on St. Alexandre and McGill streets.

Hersh grew up on St. Urbain Street, in the heart of the Jewish ghetto that produced so many of our country's artistic and professional luminaries. He graduated from the legendary Baron Byng High School in 1951. In 1955, he graduated from McGill University's Faculty of Engineering. He was at McGill when there was still a quota on the number of Jewish students allowed to study there. I think this was an element of his life that contributed a great deal to his sensitivity to discrimination.

In his professional life, which spanned about 35 years, he was considered by his peers to be a fine engineer. He was well liked and respected by his colleagues. He worked as a structural engineer for Le Group SNC (now SNC Lavalin) for 32 years and made many friends there.

I first met Hersh in March of 1962, through a blind date arranged by Alex Kowaluk (an architect for the City of Montreal, and one of several founding editors of *Our Generation*). I was 24, and he was 28. I had just moved to

Harry Rapoport was a founding editor of Our Generation from 1961. The political times were such that he used to name H.O. Landau. Over the decades he supported our work, in a variety of ways, until this year. We deeply mourn the loss.

Montreal to begin my first professional job in journalism. We met for coffee in one of those wonderful and now extinct Hungarian coffee houses on Stanley street—I believe it was the Pam Pam. We talked about politics—a subject that interested us both, though at the time, his knowledge and understanding of many issues was far more sophisticated than mine. I remember his explaining to me, quite impatiently, the difference between a socialist and a social democrat. I was a little foggy on that point.

But Hersh's involvement in the political arena went far beyond talk. He spent most of his spare time working with causes that he hoped would lead somewhere towards a saner, more compassionate world. He was the most passionately committed person I had ever met. He was active in the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, founded by British peace activist Bertrand Russell. (Remember that this was in 1962, when to be involved in peace issues was considered subversive, or crazy—or at best, hopelessly naive and misguided.) He was involved in the creation of the New Democratic Party after the demise of the CCF. He was a founding editor of the political journal, *Our Generation Against Nuclear War*, still publishing as *Our Generation*. Later he was a founding member of the Montreal Citizens' Movement, a small group of activists who dared to take on the mighty administration of Mayor Jean Drapeau. These were just a few of the groups and issues he was involved in over the years.

It's interesting to note that all those founding members of *Our Generation* have remained activists who have not lost their vision. Among those in the public eye today are Herbert Marx, former Justice Minister for Quebec and now a Quebec Superior Court Judge. Others are Abe Limonchik, prominent in past and current MCM administrations, playwright Dan Daniels, and community activists, publishers of Black Rose Books and still editors of *Our Generation*, Lucia Kowaluk and Dimitri Roussopoulos.

I had my first reporter's job—with the Montreal bureau of the Canadian Press news agency—and had been trained to keep a professional distance from any kind of partisan politics. But it was hard to stay away from this particular brew of people. They were bright, dedicated and interesting. Their lofty goals were admirable. And they were on the crest of a movement for social change that would come to full flower in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The western world was about to take a quantum leap in the evolution of social justice and human rights.

One of the qualities that made Hersh so attractive was his sense of humour. He was one of the funniest people I had ever met. He had a

wonderful bullshit detector, which saw through the absurd in a flash, and he would comment on it with a unique brand of wit. He saw the world in weird and wonderful, whimsical ways. After he had undergone three brain surgeries, he suggested wryly to the doctors that they install a hinge on his skull so that they could remove the tumour more easily in the future.

He was a strong athlete, excelling in skiing, cycling, racketball and handball, but his great love was trekking through the mountains with his friends. A high point in his life was a hike through the Grand Canyon with two of his closest friends, Haruo Kawai and Irv Ellenbogen. He had many close male friends, several dating back to the street gangs of St. Urbain street. Hersh was also a wonderful dancer. He specialized in folk dancing and cossack dancing in particular. In those days we had wonderful parties at which several of the men would perform these dances which they learned from their Russian roots. Hersh's dancing skills earned him a nickname among his friends that many called him all his life. He was Harry the Foot, or "The Foot." He was very creative. He studied sculpting and photography at l'Ecole des Beaux Arts, and he made pottery and furniture and wonderful contraptions, such as a hydroponic garden which produced lettuce and herbs.

Hersh and I began living together in a rambling apartment in the McGill ghetto exactly thirty years ago this month. We were married in September, 1963, and we had two daughters, Amy and Marie, 18 months apart. They kept us busy and they've brought us a great deal of joy—probably more joy than any of the other things we've done with our lives. Hersh was a devoted father and spent a great deal of time with his girls. As a family we had a lot of fun together. We laughed a great deal of the time. Hersh kept us laughing.

The name of Hersh's brain tumour was glioblastoma multiforma. Those acquainted with the language of cancer know that this particular tumour is always deadly, and it usually moves swiftly. The neurosurgeon who performed the first surgery told us with certainty that Hersh might live for two years—if he was lucky—but at the time would probably be less. Hersh went through a six-week course of radiotherapy and returned to work shortly afterwards. Four and a half years later the tumour recurred and he had a second surgery—then a third and fourth, each eight months apart. After the fourth surgery he agreed to be a part of an experimental protocol. A time-release wafer, which may or may not have contained chemotherapy, was implanted in his brain. (In medical jargon, this is

known as a double blind test. The patient does not know if s/he is being treated.) He was the first patient in Canada to undergo this procedure. The cancer did not recur again for more than two years. During this terribly difficult time, he never complained. He never asked the classic question, "Why me?" In fact, his response, because of the alarming statistics of cancer, was "Why not me?" This was characteristic of his democratic nature. He simply set his mind to doing everything he could to beat it.

After his third surgery, he lost the ability to speak for a few weeks. As a result of the radiotherapy, he developed low grade lymphocytic-leukaemia, the disease that killed his father. His pituitary gland was damaged, probably as a result of radiotherapy, and he had no energy. He was heavily medicated, and as a result developed osteoporosis. He developed a blood disorder known as lupus-anticoagulant, which caused several small strokes. In early January of this year, he entered the hospital for the fifth time after falling as a result of partial paralysis on his right side. He only lost his will to live when his spine began to collapse, and he could no longer get out of bed once a day to exercise in his walker. It was then that he concede defeat.

Brain cancer is a horribly painful disease to witness. It is devastating for the patient, who lives with the unimaginable stress of not knowing when the tumour will strike again, and with the knowledge that the brain is being destroyed. We lost Hersh in bits and pieces, though his sweet nature and his sense of humour never left him.

His courage in the face of this terrible, invisible adversary was dazzling. Everyone who knew him was deeply touched by it. We had the privilege of watching a warrior rising up to beat the enemy again and again, all the time knowing that in the end he would probably lose.

He was one of those rather rare people who are genuinely good to the core; he was a *mensch*. He was simply not capable of unkind or difficult behaviour. He had the correct amount of humility. When he died, what came to my mind were Horatio's words to Hamlet, "Sleep sweet prince," for that was what he was. He is free at last and for this we should celebrate. We will miss him terribly, but we are all changed and enriched for having known him.

Janet Kask
May 30, 1992

THE CONVERGENCE OF ANARCHISM, FEMINISM AND ECOLOGY: Toward a Post-Western Paradigm by Thomas S. Martin

In the closing years of the twentieth century, humanity is faced with an unprecedented crisis. The social complex known as "western civilization"—now in fact the planet's dominant paradigm—is coming unravelling. Cultures have collapsed before, but never on such a scale; this time the survival of our species is threatened. Amidst the ugly wrack of ozone depletion, epidemics and famines, capitalist greed, and vicious New World Order, radicals do not find much to cheer about. Sometimes the revolution seems an impossible fantasy. But if we look hard enough we see hopeful signs, like the weeds that sprouted from the ash not long after the bomb fell on Hiroshima. Lately the image of "reweaving" has become popular among radicals: a most revealing metaphor, historically associated with women, self-sufficiency, the creative urge, and the Fates.¹ Even as our world is coming apart, a few people have begun the work of reconstituting

1 The psychological and mythopoetic connotations of the "weaving" trope are fascinating, though beyond the scope of this essay. Even the Olympian gods had to obey the three Fates, ancient crones who spin, stretch out and cut off the thread of life. The Indo-European root *webh-* is the parent of *weave*, *web*, *wave*, *waver*, *wobble*, *Wobbly*; these descendants appear to have intermarried heavily with the offspring of *weik-*, which include *ecology*, *economy*, *witch*, *victim*, *icon*, *wicker*, *weak*, *week*, *vice*, *victory*. Those who see feminism, ecology and anarchism as three aspects of the same phenomenon will get the point.

Thomas S. Martin teaches at Sinclair Community College in Dayton, Ohio.

(not merely "repairing") its fabric. By far the most promising of these weavings is the current convergence of anarchism, feminism and ecology.

The history of this event—the first phase, I believe, in the spinning of a new post-western paradigm—is complex, controversial and incomplete. Sometimes it appears to be self-defeatingly trapped in its present disagreements rather than reaching for the future. A single essay in a journal cannot do it justice; but neither can anyone hope to understand the present state or prospects of the anarchist-feminist project without knowing the outlines of its past.

Stage One: The Strands

The first tentative steps were taken nearly a century ago by Emma Goldman, Peter Kropotkin and other radicals who, because of the cultural context of their times, may not have been fully aware of the transformative implications of their work. Although drawing upon the same anti-authoritarian traditions, the feminists and anarchists paid little attention to one another. Until recently they did not bother to explore the liberatory possibilities of an alliance, though they sometimes connected with popular reform movements and helped radicalize them to some extent. As for environmentalism, not even Kropotkin foresaw the ways in which his two vocations—political radicalism and ecological science—would finally converge. To be sure, many anarchists and feminists, and a few ecologists, understood the fundamental affinity of their world-views. But seeing the connection and making it are two different things. The final piece of the puzzle, the one that would link all the disparate elements together, had not yet fallen into place. Today we know what that missing piece was: the sense of *urgency*, the realization that if we do not forget our differences and build on our commonality, the human species will not survive.

In addition to the consciously radical work under way by the end of the nineteenth century, the scholarly foundation for an intersection of anarchism, feminism and ecology was being laid in Europe. In his careful interpretation of Lewis Henry Morgan's work on Iroquois matriarchy—well known to generations of Soviet students, virtually ignored in the west—Friedrich Engels placed "the world-historic defeat of the female sex" at the fulcrum of human history.² In Germany, the anthropologist Johann Bachofen first brought the prehistoric European mother-goddess to the

attention of scholars, arguing that her downfall had marked a loss of balance between human beings and nature.³ Tragically, much of this early work was swallowed up in Nazi "theory" and is therefore considered off limits by many of today's radicals. But at the very least, it shows that the unravelling of western civilization began not in one place, but involved many threads across the whole spectrum of the fabric.⁴

I: Radical Feminists: The Warp

Modern feminism is now two centuries old, having begun with Mary Wollstonecraft and the ideals unleashed by the French Revolution. Until quite recently, however, feminism could not be called "radical", because it did not question the basic assumptions of western culture. The women's rights and suffrage movements on both sides of the Atlantic were concerned with gaining entry to the social and political structures of patriarchy, not with overthrowing them. Certainly many women activists perceived the link between racial and sexual oppression, but were unable to articulate its radical implications. A few, like Emma Goldman and "Mother" Jones, did make the connection (usually through an anarchist nexus) and thus laid the foundation for today's radicalism.

Born in Russia, Emma Goldman (1869-1940) emigrated to America at seventeen and soon fell into the melting pot of New York City radicalism. For some years her journal *Mother Earth* promoted an alliance between anarchism and feminism, until it fell victim to the Red Scare during World War I. She denounced woman suffrage as mere cooptation, and preached sexual freedom and birth control at a time when public mention of such topics could land one in jail. She also noted, presaging the ecofeminists, that the characteristics normally associated with women—nurture, compassion, cooperation—would have to be learned by all in any future libertarian society. After her deportation in 1919 Goldman was on the periphery

2 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Selected Works* (Moscow, 1970), III:233.

3 A good cross-section of Bachofen's extensive work can be found in Johann Jakob Bachofen, *Myth, Religion and Mother Right: Selected Writings of J. J. Bachofen* (Princeton, 1967).

4 Anna Bramwell, *Ecology in the Twentieth Century: A History* (New Haven, 1989), 26-27. This marvellous book should be read by any anarchist or feminist radical who doesn't believe that her most cherished beliefs might be turned to evil uses.

of American and European radicalism, and died almost forgotten in Toronto. It is interesting to speculate about the direction American feminism might have taken had she remained in New York.

Other feminists employed an equally radical vision, but most of them were interested primarily in other issues, like labor. Mary "Mother" Jones (1830?-1930), for example, organized countless strikes for the I.W.W. and rarely missed an opportunity to lambaste the mainstream women's movement. "I don't need the vote to raise hell," was one of her more memorable epigrams. Jones' early life is obscure. A native of Ireland, she emigrated to the United States with her parents at the time of the potato famine. After her husband and children died in an epidemic and she lost her job as a seamstress, she joined the Knights of Labor and learned how to organize. She emerged as a champion of mine workers in the American West around 1900. At various times Jones was associated with populism and socialism, but her views have much in common with radical feminism and anarchism.

Elizabeth Gurley Flynn (1890-1964), the impetuous Wobbly organizer, and Lucy Parsons (1853-1942) might also be cited as examples of women who were both feminist and anarchist, but never quite became anarchist feminists. Perhaps Dorothy Day (1897-1980), founder of the *Catholic Worker*, comes closest; but her Christian piety got in the way. Much the same is true of European anarchism. Louise Michel (1830-1905) made a promising start, but later women radicals like Dolores Ibarurra (La Pasionaria) and Simone de Beauvoir were not interested in the union of anarchism and feminism as such. Until about 1970, the right constellation of circumstances had not emerged: mainstream feminism was too concerned with political rights, while radical and socialist feminists usually sublimated their aims into the labor movement.

During the seventies, feminism, in both Europe and America, underwent a painful and bitter transformation. The catalyst was the discovery that western society is *by definition* patriarchal, and thus fundamentally inhospitable to women. It became obvious that feminists must turn their backs on their own culture and craft an entirely new one for themselves. From what sources should this radical world-view draw? How could it define itself, when even the languages of the West were sexist? Should its benefits ever be extended to men? Gradually several new labels emerged: radical, liberal, cultural, separatist, lesbian feminism; but they meant little, since even the women within each tradition could not agree on what the terms meant. Fragmented and disillusioned, the feminist

movement appeared to have lost the battle as social and political conservatism made a stunning comeback. But as so often happens, in the crucible of defeat a sword not seen in ten thousand years was re-forged. We are now just beginning to understand its power.

II: Anarchism: The Weft

Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921) is a transitional figure, linking classical anarchism with its patriarchal assumptions to the ecological and feminist anarchism of today. Born to the highest levels of the Russian aristocracy, he served at the imperial court and in the army before resigning to pursue his social and scientific interests. His lifelong project was to discredit the popular scientific and social implications of Darwinism by showing that evolution and human nature are intrinsically cooperative, rather than competitive. Like the later ecologists he understood that nature is a complex web of relationships whose operations create a dynamic stability, rather than a hierarchy of species whose connections are characterized by struggle and fear. Since the social-Darwinian view coincides neatly with the dominative and competitive processes of Western civilization, it has become scientific canon, overemphasized at the expense of Darwin's actual views on co-operation within species. Kropotkin's writings, especially *Mutual Aid*, provide the necessary antidote; as the synthesis comes unravelled, many thoughtful people are rediscovering his work.

Historically Kropotkin is the chief proponent of "anarchist communism", in which society exists to serve the individual and must constantly evolve and adapt, like an organism. He called for small, self-sufficient communes, federated horizontally, without private property or public authority. No one person, he insisted, could lay claim to any portion of society's wealth, since all humanity has contributed to the present level of development: an idea which can easily be expanded to include all of nature. In some of his later works Kropotkin tried to explain the rise of domination by delving into psychology. Given the state of that science before the Great War, his failure is not surprising.

Until recently Kropotkin's ideas were not compelling to many anarchists—an ecological consciousness had to evolve first. In both Europe and America, anarchism took on a pragmatic, activist color, drawing much of its philosophy from Bakunin or Proudhon. The most successful

anarchist movements, as in Spain, were syndicalist. Like the Marxists, they viewed industrial society as the path to a materialistic paradise, and never questioned the ecological or even social wisdom of a world centered around the Machine. While usually pro-feminist, these anarchists discerned no necessary link between the exploitation of women and the oppression of workers. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, such attitudes were to be expected. Many women on both sides of the Atlantic were deeply committed to the anarcho-syndicalist project, from the Paris Commune to the struggle against Franco. But it was inherently male-oriented and indifferent to nature; it could not have merged successfully with radical feminism or with the early environmental crusade.

The first philosopher to take the ecological crisis seriously was Murray Bookchin (1921-), and he has always maintained that only an anarchist analysis can fully understand and solve that crisis. During the late 1950s and the 1960s, he did not appreciate the need to weave a feminist aspect into his analysis, but in recent years he has done so. He remains the central figure in the convergence of anarchism, feminism and ecology. Radical feminists did reach out first to the anarchists and environmentalists; but neither of those groups would have been receptive without Bookchin's brilliant work.

III: Ecology: The Fibre

Through most of human history most cultures have given no thought whatsoever to the relationship between nature and human beings. This was because there *was* no "relationship"—the two were one and the same. The Maasai would no more plow the earth than they would cut into a mother's breast; the Native Americans always apologized to the creatures they hunted. So it was too, once, in Europe and the Middle East. Western civilization took its biggest step toward ecocatastrophe twenty-five hundred years ago, when the pre-Socratic philosophers drew a distinction between *physis* and *nomos*. Environmentalism is nearly as old, since not everyone approved the idea that people might abuse and exploit other species. Still, the complete objectification of non-human nature was not accomplished until the "scientific revolution" that followed the Renaissance. This process (in Schiller's famous phrase, the "de-godding

of nature") was a necessary precondition of modern capitalism. For several centuries, Europeans and Americans greedily chewed up earth, air and water—first their own, then everyone else's—and spat out the high-tech Disneyland which the "first world" now inhabits.

In the nineteenth century a form of ecological consciousness did awaken, as a byproduct of romanticism. The art and literature which it inspired are still familiar; the philosophy less so. The romantic exaltation of nature also contributed directly to the founding of the science of ecology by Ernst Haeckel and others. This consciousness, rooted deeply in German idealism and the first revolt against the Industrial Revolution, has survived as the more 'spiritual' version of ecophilosophy. Some of today's radicals worry that its present avatar, deep ecology, has contaminated ecofeminism and may lead to a pernicious eco-fascism. They may have a point: philosophical connections can be demonstrated between this tradition and Nazism. Still, it contains profound insights and should not be dismissed *in toto*. Certainly the articulation of deep ecology and radical feminism must be very carefully orchestrated so that we do not lose the liberating potential of either.

Deep ecology begins less than half a century ago with the deceptively rustic philosophy of Aldo Leopold. This Wisconsin naturalist, author of the *Sand County Almanac* (1949), inspired a generation of scientists and philosophers. Leopold pointed out that to experience "wilderness" was essential to human psychological health, and that no one can understand or appreciate nature without intuiting her or his own unity with it. Moreover, since we now have the power to destroy ecosystems, ecology has become an ethical, as well as, a scientific pursuit. We must give up the anthropocentric notion that non-human nature exists to serve us, since to exploit nature is to exploit ourselves. Building on Leopold's vision, the "deep ecologists" have constructed a world-view more "radical" than any other discussed here, because it stands farthest outside the Western paradigm. Their "biocentrism" is based upon Leopold's dictum that "a thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise."⁵ In these two sentences, read the death warrant of western civilization.

5 Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There* (Oxford, 1949), 203.

The term "deep ecology" was coined by the Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess, but has been most fully articulated by Bill Devall and George Sessions in *Deep Ecology: Living As If Nature Mattered* (1984). The authors propose two basic principles: biocentrism, the idea that human beings enjoy no special or superior status among the species; and self-realization, the need for humans to identify with the ecosphere rather than their own egos. Deep ecology has evolved rapidly in recent years, taking directions that are often surprising—or frightening, according to some. The movement calls for nothing less than the total deconstruction of western society and the rejection of nearly all its values. It foresees a decentralized, bioregional future, a swift and drastic reduction of the human population, and the dismantling of all but the most labor-intensive industries. Is this eco-fascism? A return to the Dark Ages? Or is it—as deep ecologists claim—the only choice other than extinction?

Within a decade of Leopold's death the other leading model of radical environmentalism emerged from the pen of Murray Bookchin. Social ecology is certainly more intellectually rigorous than deep ecology, and is rooted in the traditions of classical anarchism and socialism. But it shares three of the characteristic flaws of those traditions: intolerance of opposing views, a tendency to obscurantist jargon, and disdain for spiritualism. All the same, Bookchin's "dialectical naturalism" is the most compelling new philosophy since Marx stood Hegel on his head.⁶

Since at least the Middle Ages, people who live close to the land have noticed that powerful governments are not compatible with ecological wisdom. The English Peasant's Revolt of 1381 is at least partly attributable to that awareness. William Charles Owen (1854-1929), a California socialist, wrote extensively on the connection between agrarian decline and centralized authority. In later years he returned to his native England to oppose Labourite socialism. Owen and other "green revolutionaries" launched a movement that might be termed eco-anarchist, but it proved to be a dead end. Turning one's back on the cities and going back to the land is a most appealing message, especially to Americans and Canadians; but it is not realistic in an overcrowded, urbanized world. After World War II, as

6 Bookchin's magnum opus is *The Ecology of Freedom* (1982, revised 1988). His theory of dialectical naturalism is explained in *The Philosophy of Social Ecology: Essays on Dialectical Naturalism* (Montréal, 1990).

western civilization moved toward its post-industrial and final phase, an entirely new direction was required for anarchism as well as environmentalism. That new course was set by Murray Bookchin.

Reviving Peter Kropotkin's interpretation, Bookchin demonstrated that the "natural" state for both human and non-human life is a decentralized network of entities coexisting in dynamic equilibrium. It remains stable and peaceful so long as we do not make artificial attempts at imposing order (such as government) or disturb the interconnections (as does large-scale technology). Interference with the natural human order, starting back in the Neolithic, created domination and hierarchy. We were forced to accept, and later came to believe, that some people have an inherent right to govern, while others must obey. Here at last—in Bookchin's analysis of domination—was the missing link that would bind anarchism, feminism and ecology. Once the *idea* of domination had been born, there would be no end to its application. Whether the domination of women by men prefigured the domination of nature by humans, or vice-versa, is not really important, though eco-radicals argue the point bitterly. What matters is that all forms of domination are linked, and that none can be eliminated until all are eradicated. Bookchin's anarchist social ecology soon came into conflict with the deep ecology generated by Leopold's work. Success for the eco-anarchist-feminist project requires that they settle their differences, and soon.⁷

Indeed, social ecology has sharpened its analysis primarily through its conflict with deep ecology. For example, social ecologists argue that blaming "humanity" for the ecological crisis ignores the oppressions and dominations *within* human society which are in fact responsible for the exploitation of nature. More important, say many radical feminists, is deep ecology's insistence that we must surrender our egos and learn to "think like a mountain". Not only is this a form of religious obscurantism, but it threatens the self-identity of women, won only recently through centuries of struggle and sacrifice.

Remember also that the debate on the philosophy of ecology was carried on almost entirely within the closed ranks of radicalism, at least until

7 Fortunately, they are trying. See David Levine, ed., *Defending the Earth: A Dialogue Between Murray Bookchin and Dave Foreman* (Montréal, 1991). Foreman is a founder of the deep-ecologist Earth First! movement.

the publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* in 1962. Though environmentalism went on the back burner during the era of student protest, it did not go away. It came to a slow boil, and was ready to move to the forefront in 1970 as the Vietnam war wound down. The first "Earth Day" that April promised a new era of environmental activism, but the promise was not kept. Perhaps it could not have been, given the social and political cesspool that was the seventies. Little was done about pollution, except for a few cosmetic laws established by First World governments. Indeed, these new policies often merely shunted toxic waste and pollution into the Third World.

Every problem identified by the activists at the beginning of the decade had grown far worse by its end. All was not bad news, however. Scientists learned to observe and quantify the looming ecocatastrophe; today's movement could never be taken seriously without the data they provide. And because that movement was ignored by the mainstream, it became more radical, losing all faith in the System's ability to resolve the crisis. The greed and militarism of the Reagan-Bush-Thatcher decade have greatly exacerbated the emergency but they have also radicalized many more people and organizations. We are now well into the weaving of an eco-anarchist-feminist structure, and precisely because the past twenty years have been such a wasteland, that structure will be far more radical than it might have been otherwise.

Stage Two: The Weaving

Radical feminism is still less than thirty years old, and its anarchist offshoot is even younger. It emerged from women's disillusionment with "the Movement" of the sixties, both in western Europe and North America. While idealistic young men planned marches on the Pentagon and the Sorbonne, "their" women also made coffee and provided sex. What's wrong with this picture? In fact, the exclusion of women from this century's most radical decade is not surprising. As several scholars have recently noted, the oppression of women lies at the very foundation of western civilization. As the paradigm erodes, the "upper" layers must wash away first: racism, classism, ethnic chauvinism. Even the rape of the environment was "discovered" (though not radicalized) before a genuine feminism emerged. But when the substructure is revealed, we know we

are close to a breakthrough. And feminists, precisely because they have had to wait till last, now have the power to deconstruct domination itself.

The first awareness of this opportunity came when women civil rights activists in the American South realized the link between racism and sexism. The connection had been made before (notably, by abolitionists) but no one had followed through on it. Significantly, many white women who worked with SNCC or SDS now report that they learned more about empowerment and resolution from older Southern black women than from their white or black male co-workers.⁸ Gradually women radicals came to realize that genuine liberation was not possible within the patriarchal boundaries of western culture. When groups like Cell 16, the Redstockings and the women of Greenham Common stepped over the line in search of post-western solutions, an authentic radical feminism was born.

Looking back now we can see that radical growth continued through the seventies, though it was largely underground. The bitter but necessary battle among liberal, cultural and radical feminists was fought out during this period, and it forced women to look beyond the ERA and equal-pay-for-equal-work to discover the roots of the crisis. Inevitably, radical feminism moved toward anarchism and ecology. Though the initial encounters were not always pleasant, they were productive. The publication of Susan Griffin's *Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her* (1978), followed by Carolyn Merchant's *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology and the Scientific Revolution* (1980) marks the emergence of ecofeminism. These writers claim that the organic view of nature and society, destroyed by Newtonian mechanism and the "scientific revolution," must be retrieved. The objectification of nature permitted its redefinition as a "resource," much as women had already been reduced to a species of property. The link between the oppression of women and the rape of nature had been established, and quickly found a resonance with the Murray Bookchin's analysis of domination and hierarchy. Most anarchists and feminists were exhilarated by the possibilities. As the Anarchist Federation of Norway recently put it: "A serious anarchism must also be feminist, otherwise it is a question of patriarchal half-anarchism, and not real anarchism... There will

⁸ Sara Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement & the New Left* (New York, 1979), 75-76.

be no anarchism without feminism."⁹ The three strands had begun to intertwine.

The key "discovery" which makes the convergence possible is that domination and hierarchy are functions of patriarchal society, not of men *as such*. Men may have created most of our dominative institutions, and certainly men are still the chief beneficiaries of power; but those institutions long ago took on a life of their own and now oppress everyone (though not to the same degree). In simpler terms, the liberation of women and of nature will liberate all humanity. This realization has committed radical feminism to anarchism, though it is not yet clear which project will absorb the other. On the one hand, anarchists have had to face their own male-oriented history and have now extended their definitions to include women, people of color, homosexuals, and many other exploited groups. On the other, anarchism has obliged feminists to consider their own subjugation as linked with other forms of domination, not merely historically, but ontologically as well. The elucidation of this discovery continues, especially within the social ecology movement.

Social ecofeminism, combining the best features of radical environmentalism, feminism and anarchism, is currently the best candidate for the badly needed post-western paradigm. It is not, however, the only pattern to emerge from the weaving process. A form of "deep ecofeminism" appeals to many women and men who believe, with the deep ecologists, that a more spiritual or intuitive solution to the crisis is required. A wide variety of popular books now promote the "Gaia hypothesis" as a substitute for patriarchal religion, and urge a revival of European witchcraft and other forms of paganism. Deep ecofeminism is certainly an improvement on the mechanistic world-view that has brought us to the present brink, even though it often borders on New Age "eco-la-la," as Murray Bookchin calls it.¹⁰ But its hazards may outweigh its benefits. Predictably, deep ecofeminism often degenerates into an atavistic "goddess worship" which, emotionally satisfying though it may be, does nothing to avert ecocatastrophe. Worse, it identifies women with nature, much as patriar-

chal western civilization has always done. That being said, deep ecofeminism may still have much to offer. Let us not forget who the real enemy is.

Stage Three: The Future

As committed radicals we have faced many "turning points" in recent years, and many of us are tired. We do not want to hear that yet another crucial juncture looms ahead. Sorry, but it does. The pattern has been woven: it is now abundantly clear that feminism, ecology and anarchism must unite to avert ecocatastrophe. Yet the pattern is not complete. We are still arguing over the details, fighting among ourselves, while outside the battle is being lost. Today's activists do not seem to have learned much since the legendary "socialist firing squad" of the Thirties: "everyone stands in a circle and starts shooting."

One way or another, the pattern will weave itself together. What is required, what is truly imperative, is that we broaden our appeal. For any revolutionary movement to succeed it requires a critical mass of support. But who wants to join a movement that rends rather than heals? Anarchist, ecologists and feminists have many successes to celebrate, and a lot of hard work ahead. Their debates are healthy, and should continue, but without the divisive bitterness that has characterized them before now. While polemics can clean the air, we no longer have time for the luxury of fruitless conflict.

9 Quoted by Marsha Hewitt, "Emma Goldman: The Case for Anarcho-Feminism", in Dimitrios I. Roussopoulos, ed., *The Anarchist Papers* (Montréal, 1986), 168.

10 The best critique of "eco-la-la" so far, other than Bookchin's extensive works, is *Finding Our Way* (1991), written by Bookchin's collaborator Janet Biehl.

CITIES AGAINST CENTRALIZATION

by Greg Bryant

It might seem like cities are the last places we should look for ecological sensitivity and social cooperation. After all, "urbanization" is a word we often use to describe the obliteration of wild and rural habitat, and the urban and suburban varieties of human alienation. But it is only since the rise of industrialism, and the voracious economic growth that parallels it, that cities have come to remind us of little more than insensitive development. In their defense, city dwellers could produce a long history of resistance to feudal militarism, national and imperial centralization, industrial power, and capital penetration. Certain peoples in towns and cities exemplified humanity at its best, through cooperative self-reliance, mutual care and respect, participatory democracy and widespread solidarity.

Author, Murray Bookchin,¹ has re-examined the history of the western world with an eye on urban folk's continuous battle against centralization and domination. He moves citizens and their political struggles to the foreground of urban history, diverging sharply from studies that unfortunately, for nearly a century, were written mostly for the benefit of professional urban planners, whose job was often to quiet civic participation.

Bookchin's account is a pioneer effort that challenges misleading images of modern industrial achievement and triumphant western democracy. What follows touches upon, by way of some substitute examples, only a few of the key points in his book, a series of unusual historical highlights relevant to modern ecological, political and social crises.

¹ Bookchin's *Urbanization Without Cities*, (Black Rose Books, Montréal, 1992) has been the inspiration behind this essay.

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Communal Cohesion

Nearly 10,000 years ago some very lucky people found a terrific spot by a river in a rich forest not far from major runs of ruminant animals. Catal Hüyük is the name we now use for this site in modern-day Turkey. A city of some 6,000 people emerged, with houses pressed up so tightly against one another, without any streets, that the town was traversed on rooftop. Since these urbanites were capable of planting and harvesting, we call them neolithic. But the inhabitants of Catal Hüyük, the world's oldest known city, survived some 1,000 years overwhelmingly as hunter-gatherers. Such subsistence is usually assumed to reflect a nomadic lifestyle, not an urban one.

Many other Mesopotamian cities, rooted in fertile river valleys, grew through reliance on improving agricultural techniques such as irrigation. Yet there is evidence of agriculture emerging very early without cities: the Wadi Kubaniya of prehistoric Egypt were nomads, using the planting and harvesting of crops as just one of many means of survival.

In other words, cities and agriculture do not necessarily require one another. Farming usually becomes a major tool for maintaining settlements in surroundings not so idyllic as Catal Hüyük's. The exceptions do not indicate that the neolithic urban trend wasn't powerful, but they show that there must be other reasons why people pile upon one another besides the need to manage agricultural land.

Humans were not the first species to find that mutual aid and cooperation improved one's chances of survival. Our social flexibility certainly evolved before Catal Hüyük was founded. Probably very early in that city's history people encountered serious health and sanitation problems with the dense living, yet the community stayed together a thousand years. Those who were uncomfortable left, but those who stayed benefited from reduced environmental pressures, superseded by social pressures within a system protecting a large number of families. Commercial pressures, such as buying cheap and selling dear along trade routes, are often considered of primary importance in the formation of cities. In Western Europe nearly 1,000 years ago, rising population stimulated the rapid growth of towns and cities, which became centers of regional trade and craftwork. Yet commerce, of the kind that in the late middle ages gave magnates of trade and production great political power, was of little importance in the large cities of the ancient world, difficult as this may be to imagine.

Ancient Rome, which didn't develop a commercial port until it was already a major power in Western Europe, was mostly a center of consumption, military bureaucracy, and local production. This is not surprising—a general rule for absolutist territorial states is that their largest cities produce very little. They are parasites: this is how Rousseau described 18th century Paris. There is some parallel to this among citadels of power in our own time: many of our biggest cities consume much more than they produce in tangible goods, even those which began as industrial manufacturing centers. But ancient west Europeans lacked *respect* for commerce—buying and selling was done but there were no great ancient trading houses, nor a Roman bourgeoisie. Commerce as *we* know it did not rule the ancient world.

Looking only for the environmental, bureaucratic or commercial pressures that force people together into cities sidesteps what was to them an important cohesive force: community ideology. Two thousand, three hundred years ago Aristotle protested against describing cities as strictly practical—he felt that strong community was itself a high point of civilization.

Because of natural and human pressures, townspeople come to see unorganized interfamily relations as no longer sufficiently fruitful. There emerges an apparent need for broader discussion of community goals, ethical and practical. The society learns to depend upon this discussion, as well as the benefits of carrying out a community plan and the satisfaction of seeing the results. Participation in this kind of community can become addictive.

There are exceptions of course—there is pervasive evidence of single-family homesteads, hamlets of a few isolated families, and hermits engaging in either tactical or psychological refuge. Most people lived in villages that needed to conduct rather little political discussion on a day-to-day basis. But for others, the special kind of community feeling in those small pre-industrial towns and cities, once tasted, was difficult to get off the palate. When Sparta defeated democratic Manitea, dismantled the city and dispersed the inhabitants to villages, Xenophon suggests that the Maniteans suffered mostly psychologically. When given a chance, they re-declared their city a generation later, under no strictly environmental or commercial pressure to do so. They just wanted their town back.

The city is the psychological and political center for much of recorded history, partly because cities are where records are kept. But it must be admitted that they can foster unusually vigorous social interaction. Urban communities can hold as strong a place in the human imagination as religions, ethnicities, nations, kingdoms or empires. What we today call

the Roman empire was in ancient times known primarily as Rome, the Eternal City. To destroy their rivals the Carthaginians, some Roman senators felt they needed to destroy the city of Carthage itself, a difficult, rash, and genocidal deed whose ultimate consequence was the political collapse of the Roman republic.

Many cities developed gradually from villages, castles, churches or ports. But powerful ancient metropolises such as Rome, Carthage and Athens established many cities at one stroke to serve as outposts and colonies. Though quickly constructed for openly territorial purposes, these towns were still meant to satisfy personal cravings for diversity and interaction.

In most pre-industrial towns, ecologically responsible behavior was perfectly compatible with the city's peculiar, vibrant level of regular social contact. To imagine a kind of ecological city, one has to blink away modern urban impressions, and visualize cities based in and served by primarily rural economies, cities that produced goods mostly for their own or their region's consumption and where urbanites helped with their region's harvest. They were proudly local, willing to defend their city's and their region's autonomy. Their casual contact would seem to us today to be overwhelmingly personal. It was in these cities that the original form of politics was born: regular group discussion and face-to-face decision-making. This kind of direct politics has almost disappeared in the mass media demagoguery of the modern age.

Today what we call politics is really statecraft, something done by professional politicians and those who imitate their individualistic manipulations in smaller groups. The change in the use of the word politics, with its root of polis or city, reflects the astounding changes that the world has undergone in the past two hundred years: among them the formation of the modern bureaucratic nation state and the invasion, through modern communication, of corporate values into our social relations. An early example of the *original* politics, that of the city, can be found in classical Athens.

The Athenian City-Democracy

An indication of unusually wide political participation in Athens is the torrent of criticism Greek political institutions received from Greek writers allied with the rich. In contrast, Roman institutions, constructed to the

advantage of the wealthy, were rarely criticized by contemporary literate Romans.

The Athenian assembly gathered around 40 times a year, attended by as much as 1/4 of the city's population. They were an experienced, politically active group, rich farmer and poor peasant citizens alike. When Theophrastus criticizes peasants, he complains that they inappropriately provide too much detail of assembly meetings to neighbors in the countryside who didn't make the gathering. We would praise this today as healthy grassroots communications.

A staggering number of Athenian residents were involved in running the city and debating its future. It is difficult to compare its level of participatory democracy to any city of its size since. From the end of the 6th century B.C. for some two centuries, keen attendance at the open assembly, selection by lot of 500 new people every year to serve on the council, juries of up to 1,000 people, and scores of official posts rotating regularly, point to a depth of citizen participation at odds with modern ideas of politics.

Citizens participated broadly not only in decision-making, but in carrying out policy as well. When a decision to go to war was made, it was often a reluctant one since many of the people voting would themselves have to go to battle. Assemblies meeting to choose among such serious options were especially well attended. The close connection between decision and implementation gave demagogues a very difficult time in Athens—no matter how well someone's speeches roused the crowd, if their policies did not work their influence quickly dissolved.

Freedom of speech in Athens meant the freedom to speak and be heard by the entire assembly. It meant the freedom to present legislation and participate in the discussion prior to making decisions. The open public assembly then had full power to act—the assembly even structurally dissolved itself for a short time in 411 B.C. Of course, the bulk of public debate took place outside of the formal meetings, where even non-citizens must have contributed.

A smaller council of 500 did what the full public assembly decided they should do, and these duties changed constantly. This embodied a very important lesson: in responsible government, representatives shouldn't be given blanket power; instead, the full body politic must actively and regularly decide the limits of the officials' powers, to allow for changing circumstances. These specific limits must be determined in person, con-

straining somewhat the scale at which this kind of assembly system can be used. Athens was a very large body politic, perhaps a hundred thousand citizens, so various mechanisms were found to ensure that officials would not abuse their positions.

Most offices lasted for one year, could not be held twice, and were followed by a public review of behavior in office. Influence mongering was difficult since most offices were filled by a random drawing from among all citizens, i.e. sortition, rather than through campaigning. Not only did this prevent the buying of votes, but culturally it required a deep commitment to educating everyone well enough to be loyal, competent and principled public servants.

Athenians were, in a sense, extremely well educated. This does not mean that they were literate, for this was mostly a verbal, interactive age. For these Greeks, education was not a systematic program of lectures and exams leading to certification, but rather the regular lessons and tests of daily life. In such an active political community no one could be shut out of unofficial discussion, since the future responsibilities of the average citizen would be very great.

This immersion into community life was what developed the distinctive individual. Rather than mold the citizen through the homogenization of formal education, as Sparta did, the Athenians felt that individual character and original opinion must develop in order to best serve the city. A follower adds less than an independent, thinking individual, enlivening important discussions on community direction. This was the purpose of education, or *paideia*. Nietzsche's complaint that genius can develop only *against* the community doesn't take into account Athenian ideals of personal development, and instead reflects the fear, among his generation's elite, of the emerging impersonal era of mass politics.

Athenians not only encouraged individual ability—laws often required paid officials or jurors to take *some* stand in a debate—they also fought the creation of state structures that would limit the citizen. Athens had no bureaucracy to speak of, making the phrase "city-state" now applied to it seem inappropriate. The small administration changed every year. The judicial system was not run by judges, but by juries that were extremely large, discouraging bribery, and which were paid by the city and selected by lot. They were diversely constituted and empowered to interpret law, evidence, custom and notions of justice in whatever way they felt fair. Yet courts were called only as a last resort in resolving a conflict: prosecutors

were fined if unsuccessful, cutting down on unnecessary legal proceedings, and the overwhelming social preference was settlement through informal mediation or sometimes arbitration. Citizens over sixty years old were expected to make themselves available to anyone needing mediation.

At every turn we see Athenians resisting state structure. They considered the maintenance of standing armies in times of peace a waste of the individual. In the end, however, they maintained a small empire, in part because of the employment opportunities its navy offered some of its poorer citizens. This was something of a circular trap they inherited: the poor could find few other jobs mostly because of the import of slaves captured in imperial looting.

Even within their empire the Athenians tried to convert others to a direct democratic model of government, and in most subject cities they counted on the support of the poor and the hostility of the rich. They were well aware that their social and political achievements were unique—the theme runs through the best of Greek drama. But their ideas of progress and empire were not boundless. For example, unlike many later empires they were acutely aware of the limited ability of their local ecology to sustain them.

Athens was the political center of a rural region, more like a modern county than a city, with most of its wealthiest and poorest citizens living directly off the land. Since the citizens of Athens were overwhelmingly agriculturalists, it should not be surprising that self-reliance was the mark of success in this city. In fact, those who did not grow their own food were considered politically suspect—how could they form an independent judgement if they were not independent in life? Because many of those who were not independent were urban manual workers, this thinking is often misinterpreted as some general Greek disparagement of work, brought on by the over-dependence on slave labor. It was instead a disparagement of producers who were totally dependent on buyers, and of employee-employer dependent relationships. Most wealthy and poor citizens worked very hard for themselves and for the community.

The community was of course not always united and cooperative. The Greeks were keenly aware of the battle between rich and poor. The rich often put up much money to hold festivals, developing a patron-client relationship in city and countryside. This largesse was encouraged, and its influence held in check, by Athens' diverse political body.

Although it never developed the level of urban democracy Athens did, Rome experienced a warping of a similar patron-client relationship, one which took political power away from the poor and accountability away from the rich, a consequence of self-sustaining wars. This is the urban political atmosphere that spawned the gratuitous destruction and enslavement of Carthage, leading to a burden on Rome's poor and an attempt by the Gracchi brothers to relieve it.

Reforming the Republic

Roman tombstones always list the state offices held by the deceased during their lives, and classical Athenian tombstones never do. The rich in the city of Rome aspired to the bureaucracy, to powerful official positions that emerged from centuries of military growth. A magistrate's *imperium*, with its root sense of command, allowed him to issue arbitrary punishments against the populace without appeal. This is a very long way from Athenian direct democracy.

In Rome the Republic held assemblies, but there was little discussion of issues. The existence of the assembly merely maintained a fiction of popular power. Citizens could only vote on legislation and candidates presented to them through the senate. The assembly became just another arena for political maneuvering among a corrupt elite, of a kind we are very familiar with today.

The senate was the key decision-making body of the Roman republic, basically an extremely exclusive lifelong club. There were no ways to work within the system: Livy and Dionysius of Halicarnassus attributed what early victories were made by the poor to riots and demonstrations.

The rulers of republican Rome succeeded in professionalising politics, in making it less personal. In parallel, the poor lost their sense of community power, and very often community concern, at the center of this growing military-bureaucracy. It's easy to understand the classical difference between democracies and republics—in one the masses act, in the other they are acted for. But among representatives they occasionally find a champion.

Around 135 B.C. Tiberius Gracchus was elected a tribune of the people. He was unusually sensitive to his role, and risked a great deal to try to repair the lot of the poor Roman citizen. Tiberius prepared legislation and

proposals, for the approval of the open popular assembly, within what was traditionally considered the territory of the senatorial elite—a strategy for power redistribution that modern radical politicians might pursue. He had the assembly vote to remove from office tribunes in the pockets of the rich. He passed reforms to redistribute lands to the peasants, lands that had been taken by the rich to create plantations farmed with the new slaves from Carthage. For his trouble Tiberius was clubbed to death by a mob of senators.

Gaius Gracchus, Tiberius' brother, was later elected tribune and pursued the same course—but he managed to create a serious problem for the elite of the Roman state by passing laws to remove the senate from complete power over the judicial system. He was assassinated by senate interests, and the city plunged into increasingly violent struggles for power until Augustus established himself as Rome's first Emperor.

The popular romantic notion that the senatorial republicans were in some way the "good guys" *versus* dictators and emperors, must be displaced by the evidence that it was the republican patricians' resistance to democratic reform, both urban and rural, that led to the destruction of stable city politics and eventually to Imperial rule.

Medieval Tensions

Around the 5th century, with the final collapse in western Europe of the Roman empire and its formalisms and codes, came the widespread community reassertion of informal local custom. Custom was both locally distinctive and unwritten. Throughout the middle ages most political, legal and economic systems were flexible: indeed those three aspects were never considered individually. It was not until just before the early modern period in Europe, an era we associate with the Renaissance, that rigidity, formality and statecraft began again to seriously take hold of daily life.

Informal custom and local common sense were the primary guides for people in the middle ages, a time of unusually pervasive collective rule. This does not mean that an egalitarian ideology prevailed: a loose hierarchy was generally accepted as natural. But anyone with power had to consult and come to agreement with their community. The basis of these communities were assemblies, either town assemblies where everyone

could make themselves heard, or assemblies of nobles or representatives meeting with a king. The idea of hierarchy wasn't much questioned as long as the people in power acted responsibly, and as long as it was possible to check corruption. If rulers overtaxed those who provided their food, they might starve, so there were strong and deeply felt social obstacles to abuse. When there was abuse, it was considered the duty of those below to get rid of the abuser, despite lower social rank. It was at this time when we first see the word 'commune' take on its radical connotations: communities asserted themselves against the rising nobility.

With population increases leading to a strengthening of the formality of lordships and kingdoms in the 13th century, we see an increase in charters declaring town rights. These were typically explanations of existing custom presented to the nobility. Gradually the habit of consulting with the community at large gave way to government by committee, where not only did people need to evaluate their trust in nobility, but also their trust in representatives attending various, nearly invisible, small meetings. The transition to "committeism" was a subtle one, and though it surely seemed natural, it allowed bureaucracies to organize decision-making without involving the public.

Yet even in these growing states popular pressure could easily assert itself. Many communities and groups were easily organized in medieval times, through the informal 12th century guilds of family, friends, parish or craft, as well as through the more formal alliances of later centuries. There was no topic truly outside an organized community's domain: justice, public ownership, economic restrictions, parish priests, or revolt. When decisions were made, strong unanimity was most highly regarded, compromising consensus was accepted if unanimity was impossible, and voting was considered a distasteful necessity on occasion. Overall their cooperative decisions were successful in keeping harsh domination in check.

In prehistoric times, towns like Catal Hüyük survived because they represented advantageous cooperation, and the same can be said of many medieval towns and cities. But if their neighbourhoods were run by conflicting crafts or families, the cities needed to form complex governments to deal with internal conflict—otherwise they would not continue to enjoy the benefits of communal living. Sometimes these actions led to further erosion of communal custom. In Italian communes a town leader, the *podestà*, was often elected from outside, so as not to be partisan to

neighbourhood family disputes. But an outsider could not maintain custom and would lean increasingly on Roman and church-inspired formalisms.

The necessary alliances of different interests within a city made associations between cities a natural extension of politics. Cities often formed leagues in defence against alliances of nobility. Many were temporary, such as the Lombard League of the independent communes of Northern Italy, whose sole purpose was to push out the German King Frederick Barbarossa in the 12th century. Other alliances, such as the 2nd Rhenish League and the Swiss Confederation, aimed for more permanent mutual support against the taxes and controls of Kings, Emperors and Barons.

Most significant medieval history may be seen freshly as the actions of alliances, and with this in mind we can see emerging awareness of the problems with territorial centralization. When King John was forced by a league of rebel Barons to sign the Magna Carta in 1215, the point was unrelated to modern democracy, and was instead the maintenance of local authorities against the King's abusive centralizing tendencies. Local control was maintained through an alliance against the center. Kings and Emperors were often *elected* positions, or treated as such, and the Magna Carta was just one of many charters written at the time asserting the customary collective responsibilities of people on different levels of a hierarchy.

Cooperative associations were both pervasive and manifold in medieval times. In Bologna, a town where many teachers and students gathered as early as the 11th century, students felt cheated by both teachers who did not cover much ground and by townspeople who overcharged for lodging, clothing, food and books. The students formed a union, modeled after the guilds, hence the name *Universitas*, University, meaning "all of us"—a medieval alliance still with us in greatly modified form.

In the 14th century many large scale alliances and interests became formalized. The Church, nobles and patricians formed estate committees to check the King's power within government. Demands for structural reform arose, even demands to be freed from the hierarchy. Switzerland is of course a prime example. In France in the 1350's Etienne Marcel tried to unite merchants, artisans and the peasants of the *Jacquerie* rebellions through the 3rd estate, an assembly meant to represent everyone neither noble nor clerical. His attempt to create a union against the King and nobility is of the same trend as Wat Tyler's successful British peasant revolt

in 1381, and Cola di Rienzi's insurgent government in Rome in 1347. Cola called for an Italian confederation of communes, and 25 Guelf towns sent him representatives.

As trade increased and cities grew, monarchs tried whenever possible to tax their wealth, setting the economy of the cities against the territorial state. Many, such as the free cities within the Hapsburg Empire and their various leagues, resisted and maintained commercially supported independence for centuries. However, the wealthy classes within the cities generally made political amends with the royalty of the solidifying territorial states, often against the interests of peasants or rural barons. The territorial states swallowed the cities, their wealthy merchants, independent artisans and working poor alike. Urban governments then tended towards tyranny, maintained by gun and guile, and were plagued by insurrection.

Unfortunately for absolutist states, they were in the end unable to digest all the forces represented by cities, and it wasn't until the failure of absolutism that new models of the territorial state could emerge. And these new models had far more potential for centralization than any previously.

Modern Times

In France, where royal absolutism was most developed, the Bourbon Kings regularly taxed commerce beyond the economy's limits, making merchants pine for a constitutionally limited monarchy, like Britain's. Revolution against the Stuart Kings in the 17th century had weakened the British monarchy, and this unfettered the merchant economy. Government support for import and export set the stage for the massive textile production of the industrial revolution.

The French monarchy went bankrupt in their support for the American Revolution against rival Britain. The ensuing dissatisfaction with the Bourbon administration was one of the causes of the French revolution. Contempt for a monarch's centralizing tendencies was nothing new: the medieval rich were a united class only in the face of peasant rebellions. Positions like the prime minister, originally the King's valet, smacked too much of the kingdom as an extension of the King's household, and angered nobles who felt that power within their own households was then undermined.

Aristocratic discontent created opportunities for the bourgeoisie, the extremely wealthy, free-thinking group that had evolved around commerce. With the support of the masses the modern alliance of urban insurrection with social revolution was forged. This opened the door, which the bourgeois then tried to shut, on a wildly democratic, revolutionary experiment in the heart of the former absolutism: the Paris commune of the sans-culottes. By 1792, sectional assemblies all over the city were opened to every class, and the poor were paid to attend. The sections ran their own police, relief and defense against the reacting aristocracy. The assemblies succeeded in maintaining the economy and judiciary for their sections, but within two years they were betrayed by the hardening revolutionary government under Robespierre.

With the revolution came a major component of modern centralization: patriotism. In France, the revolution gave a bigger portion of the population than ever before a feeling of having a stake in their country, more than could have ever been possible under Kings. This patriotism allowed Napoléon to tear through Europe's aristocracies, and develop what was at the time unprecedented central authority.

The downfall of royal power, and the emergence of an urban-based professional class of bourgeois politician, made room for a new economic trend. By the middle of the 19th century, after Britain's successes in the cotton trade, industrialism began to take hold, supported by capital and nations in a force that is one of the most destructive of modern times: self-sustaining growth.

Transport costs had kept inland exploitation in check for centuries: the situation in 1800 was barely better than it was in ancient times, when it was cheaper to ship from Constantinople to Spain than overland 75 miles. But the railroad, invented originally to haul coal, opened the land for exploitation of people and resources. The return on money invested was phenomenal, making possible the colonization of both inland Europe and what was to become the third world.

Expectations for investment returns were high, and the economic pressure on borrowed money has continued to drive capital and technology into every corner of natural and human existence. For the sake of profit, ancient life-styles were uprooted, spawning romanticism, starvation, migration and the dissolution of medieval agrarian self-sufficiency. When the economy slowed down towards the end of the 19th century, formally laissez-faire states began to panic and compete with each other for markets

and resources, leading to wars in the 20th century of unprecedented violence.

Transactions within the tight trading districts of cities facilitated this growth, but cities cannot be completely blamed for the new economies. The industrial revolution started in the countryside, spawning new cities as it grew successful. Cities and their citizens can most usefully be seen as tools of the process, but not passive ones: they resisted many changes along the way.

Artisans involved in export production, such as home weavers who were paid to use hand looms well into the industrial revolution, were completely lost as automation began to take over. Their resistance had a major impact on the first half of the 19th century, such as in the nationally organized Chartist movement in Britain, and in most of the revolutions leading to the continent wide rebellions in 1848. Guilds, and later labor unions, were often banned because of the insurrectionary potential of artisans, and central city police forces now first appeared to put down riots over food and living/working conditions. Rioting occurred more often in cities than in the countryside in part because there were more obvious sites for protest. The rural situation was much worse, however. In Ireland the famine of 1846-1848, during which one million died and another million emigrated, was a consequence of the pressure for rents by absentee landlords. The pressure forced Irish peasants into dependence on the highest yield crop of the day: the potato.

A civic resistance now fought the massive centralization taking place for the sake of capital. In the worst of times in Europe, both before the 1848 revolts and after the depression starting in the 1870s, mutual aid societies, revolutionary organizations and socialist groups pushed their way onto the political stage, leading many nationalist movements and toppling many monarchs. These groups pushed for democracy, usually in the form of electoral republicanism. It must be pointed out that modern democracy developed in *reaction* to capitalism, mostly in the second half of the 19th century, and in spite of the hesitance of a liberal commercial class who at the time paid mostly lip-service to equal rights.

The corporate elite looked for easier game to exploit than the newly enfranchised people in their own countries. They began to look towards overseas conquest, and the popular support it would bring in the industrialized world. This mix of mass politics and gunboat economic growth ended in territorial wars among countries no longer satisfied with the kind of sophisticated, bounded political treaties Bismarck was so good

at forging in the late 19th century. Industry and capital grew in great leaps, and national ambitions replaced civic ones as cities grew larger and more impersonal. When conditions grew bad enough in cities to affect the wealthy, great expenditure and management was forthcoming, along with ghettos and police to isolate "the problems".

Such local and international exploitation sparked global migration, overwhelmingly to urban centers. Within cities to this day we see very strong immigrant neighbourhoods not so easily assimilated to corporate consumer culture. Cities are hotbeds of activism, their problems and density often sparking cooperation that cannot be easily detected, for example, in the suburbs of the United States, where much of the country lives. It is difficult to imagine insurrection in suburbia, with political discussion limited by distances and a prevailing tendency to *hire* government to do politics and run cities. In suburbia we can see considerable loss of social cohesion, and it has become obvious that, to use Bookchin's phrase, society's grassroots are turning to straw.

When urban governments find themselves without money, as they do today, public volunteerism begins to look more attractive. But officials still hold onto the decision-making power, both because that is what they know how to do and because citizens believe that the city is a business for which one must employ professionals. But what better way to satisfy increasing numbers of volunteer citizens than to give them back the ability to make serious decisions? Decentralized cities can run with much less money than centrally administered ones because the work that gets done is for your friends and neighbours, who pay you back in similar fashion without participating in the cash network. Athens and the first Paris commune were both such "amateur cities", where the government's role is to help organize, not to force ideas or perform services.

The ideals of city-democracy have not disappeared. Town meetings, still common in New England, have a respectable resonance in US culture, and these kind of assemblies are the key to uniting people on the local level. In confederation it is still possible that assemblies in towns, cities and the countryside can break up the enormous centralized power of wasteful, hulking nation-states.

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APPROPRIATE POWER: The Case For Nonviolent Social Revolution

by Mark Anderlik

We the People Reclaiming Our Streets (WE-PROS), a citywide network of neighbourhood organizations, march up and down the streets [of Detroit] chanting 'We love our neighbourhood! Pack up your crack and don't come back!'...In every neighbourhood where we have marched dope houses have closed down sometimes just because they don't like to be in the spotlight; sometimes because the police are more likely to raid a dope house after we have drawn attention to it...In the Reach neighbourhood, where marches have been taking place for more than a year, crime has gone down 80% and the neighbourhood is becoming a real community where neighbours work with one another and with the school, and residents can walk the streets in safety. These [neighbourhood] organizations...are not asking the government or the corporations for rights or jobs. Instead, there is a general understanding, more implicit than explicit, that the corporations and the government can't help us because they are largely responsible for our plight. So the only one who can save us is us.¹

Those of us in North America who are actively seeking to create a new and liberatory social order, one founded on peace, grassroots democracy,

¹ Grace Lee Boggs' speech before the Detroit Catholic Pastoral Alliance, Feb. 21, 1990.

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feminism, equality, ecological harmony and freedom, often feel trapped in the seemingly limited range of strategic avenues for such a change. We can put our energies into getting institutions to reform themselves through lobbying or by getting the "right" people elected. This reform activity has been tried by countless movements, has created some band-aid solutions, but in the end has not changed the root causes of our increasingly desperate social problems.

We can also put our efforts into the New Age movement—a modern version of a type of religious activism that believes in the enlightenment of the individual as the key to unlock the door of disharmony and social disease. This method usually ends up in egocentrism or in a profane religious belief in a *deus ex machina*, a god that will solve our problems for us. A third way we can direct our efforts for social change is toward the scattered groups that call for armed revolution. This effort is fed by romantic notions that it could succeed against the most powerful militaries in history and that it would not install a repressive regime unlike almost every other instance of a successful armed revolution. There is a more promising way to radical social change: nonviolent social revolution.

Nonviolent Power

Nonviolent power is a kind of social power created through actions that seek to neither kill nor injure an opponent. Nonviolent action is a form of combat that rejects weapons of war. It can sometimes mean involvement in electoral politics and reform of institutions, but more often than not it is used by organizations of ordinary people creating or defending social values when established institutions can not or will not do so.

Nonviolent and military action share many similarities. Both methods claim a social legitimacy and authority, and they both seek to control or change the power of an opponent. And both demand of its practitioners great courage, discipline, resourcefulness, skilful use of strategy and tactics, and a willingness to make a personal sacrifice for a cause.

There are profound differences between these two forms of social power as well. Most significant is that in nonviolent action the means are consistent with the ends. However noble the cause, however humane the warriors, war is always an inhuman horror that inevitably sows seeds of future violence. Nonviolent action greatly minimizes, if not eliminates,

such vicious cycles of violence. While nonviolent action can never eliminate the possibility of death, injury and destruction in a conflict, it can keep such violence from escalating better than the force of arms, for it subverts the law of war of "kill or be killed."

The weapons of nonviolent combat also differ from those of military combat. Nonviolent weapons include demonstrations, strikes, boycotts, noncooperation with authority, civil disobedience, occupations and dual power (also known as parallel institutions). These weapons are actually the organized solidarity of particular social groups or of a society as a whole. Unlike military methods, their effective use is not dependent on the physical strength of individual combatants, industrial and financial backing, or technological developments.

A long and significant history of nonviolent struggle exists, though this history is far less known or regarded as that of military struggles.² The Left around the world has generally discounted and ignored this part of popular history in favor of the parliamentarism of social democracy or the militarism of violent revolution, or else has adopted only one or two of its tactics while ignoring others as in the case of anarcho-syndicalism and the revolutionary general strike.

In this day and age the use of military violence as a useful tool for societies has lost any sense of logic and proportion. From the nuclear missile, to the armed "liberation front", to the Persian Gulf War, military violence is showing itself unable to offer much substantial change for the better beyond the obvious death, destruction and terror it inflicts on ordinary people.

In contrast, nonviolent action, while no panacea, is showing modest but positive results with far fewer casualties and far less destruction. For example, the intifada in Palestine and the boycotts, strikes and international sanctions in the anti-apartheid struggle has proved to be more politically effective and socially constructive than the armed actions of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and the African National Congress (ANC). The essentially nonviolent, grassroots actions in Palestine and South Africa have opened up promising, new political terrain. Other cur-

2 For the most comprehensive documentation of nonviolent tactics and history consult Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, (Boston: Porter Sargent, 1973).

rent examples can be found in the nonviolent ouster of Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines and the rise of the Solidarity Movement in Poland.

Nonviolent Power and Institutions of Domination

Nonviolent power exists in accord with the social theory that all institutions owe their continued existence and power from the consent and cooperation of those subject to its rule or influence. This is in contrast to the theory that institutions and their leaders have inherent and independent powers that ultimately can only be wrested away by superior force or given away by the ruler.

Political writers of many stripes have understood the power held by rulers and institutions as conditional upon the consent of its subjects. Niccolo Machiavelli, for instance, considered this to be a political axiom and summed it up by writing,

...for he [a Prince] who has but a few enemies can easily make sure of them without great scandal, but he who has the masses hostile to him can never make sure of them and the more cruelty he employs the feebler will his authority become; so that his best remedy is to try and secure the goodwill of the people.³

Institutions are not only political, but are also economic, familial, sexual, religious, ethnic, professional, and so on. The power of consent and cooperation that sustains institutions is not always equally held among all "subjects", but is fundamentally present to some degree with all. Often the consent is only actively given by a minority of the subjects, and is passively given by the majority; such is, arguably, the case with the institutions of patriarchy and racism. Even if a majority dissents with the institution, it can continue to exercise power if the cooperation of the dissenters is not withdrawn. Existing institutions have powers of reproduction, inertia and sanctions that can be used against attempts to control its power.

3 Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince and The Discourses*, (New York: Random House, 1950), p. 162. See also the writings of William Godwin, Auguste Comte, Jean Jacques Rousseau, David Hume, Antonio Gramsci, Adolf Hitler, and Bertrand de Jouvenel, for example.

More particularly, for institutions of domination hierarchy, the maintenance of subject obedience finally rests upon the use of violent sanctions. If the dissent and noncooperation of the subjects so threaten the power and survival of such an institution, it will use the sanctions of death, imprisonment, impoverishment, torture, rape, etc. to defend itself.

Obedience exists only when one has complied with or submitted to an institutional command; however it isn't the sanction itself that compels obedience, but rather the fear of it. This can be observed when sanctions are removed, such as a person released from prison who is afraid of future imprisonment. This person has internalized the sanction, and thus modifies his or her behaviour to avoid the displeasure of the authority. When this fear is overcome, then even violent sanctions are useless. Because the process of overcoming fear comes from within an individual, the obedience compelled by sanctions is therefore fundamentally voluntary; even though the choice to disobey may be extremely difficult, it still remains a choice. When an institution loses the consent and cooperation of its subjects and they no longer fear the institution's ultimate sanctions, the institution is in serious jeopardy.

We in North America live in societies suffused with institutions that are domination hierarchies. By domination I mean the authority men have over women in patriarchy, capital has over workers in capitalism, whites have over other racial groups in racism, the State has over the individual, humans over the rest of nature, and so on. At the top of the hierarchy of domination institutions, overarching all the rest, is the nation-state system and capitalism. These twin pinnacles of violence and domination oversee the maintenance of the whole social system of violence and domination.

These hierarchies operate with an elite class who are entrusted to use what tools the institution avails them to maintain and when possible, expand its power. These tools are not always violent. Antonio Gramsci⁴ understood that the rule of advanced capitalism, for example, is more a function of the processes of what he called hegemony than the use of starvation or state sanctions. Hegemony is the building of "consensus" through education, mass media, culture, and ideology so that most people

4 Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, trans. and ed. by Q. Hoare & G. Nowell Smith, (New York: International Publishers, 1971), pp. 12, 56n, 57. Also Walter L. Adamson, *Hegemony and Revolution*, (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1980), pp. 170-171.

are convinced that not only is the institution desirable but inevitable and natural. Hegemony is a material acknowledgement of the need for domination hierarchies to have the consent and cooperation of the dominated, for Gramsci believed that it is only a weak entity that heavily relies on violent sanctions to maintain its power.

Despite the image of inevitability and desirability, an institution of domination (as every other kind of institution) is truly characterized by its ultimate sanctions. For domination institutions the ultimate sanctions of violence are believed to be the foundation of power. Nation-states have both war and the death penalty/imprisonment as its ultimate sanctions. Likewise, capitalism threatens with poverty and the use of state sanctions; patriarchy uses rape and abuse; genocide is the ultimate sanction of racism. It is the unquestioned surrender to these institutions of the power to use violent sanctions that accounts for the persistence of war, poverty, racism and other social diseases.

To attack the roots of the interconnected social diseases, the domination institutions must be abandoned and replaced. Attempts at liberal reform will not suffice, for using *solely* the means these institutions allow for change is to also accept the limits to that change they impose. One fundamental limit is that no change will directly undercut the power of the institution. To have power within a domination institution, one must also play by the rules inherent to the institution. So when an effect of a social disease becomes a public issue, and so threatens to become "unmanageable," an institution of domination could make some ameliorative changes (to keep encouraging liberal reformers if for no other reason) but will not get to the root of the problem if in so doing it challenges the system of domination. For example, homelessness is not solved by creating shelters or by imposing a work for welfare scheme. Its causes are rooted in capitalism, yet no government social service agency or multinational corporation has called for the abolition of capitalism to solve homelessness. To do so would jeopardize the existence of social service agencies and corporations.

To simply have faith in the social transformative power of consciousness change (such as that espoused by the New Age movement and some liberals) is to deny the fact that domination institutions are both equal to and more than the sum of the individuals associated with it. To end war, sexism, poverty, ecological rape, etc. the *structures* of domination need to be dismantled in addition to individual consciousness change. William

Stringfellow eloquently describes institutions of domination as having "autonomy of powers as creatures": they have their own culture, their own values and their own agenda independent of any particular leader. And "to fail to notice the autonomy of these powers as creatures abets their usurpation of human life and their domination of human beings."⁵

In a similar vein, Andre Gorz writes:

As society ages —and this is particularly true of capitalist society —positions of power and the modalities by which they are exercised tend to become increasingly predetermined...No one is allowed to conquer power by and for her or himself. All she or he can do is to rise to one of the positions conferring a modicum of power on its holders. Consequently, it's no longer people who have power; it is the position of power which have their people.

The institutions of domination can't be reformed to become institutions of freedom. The domination institutions need to disappear simultaneously with the functioning appearance of institutions of freedom. What is needed, in short, is a social revolution.

Contrary to generations of dominationist propaganda, these institutions of freedom are not outside human experience. Riane Eisler for one has questioned this view by reexamining archaeological studies of Minoan and some Neolithic societies. She has found their institutions to be substantially based upon equality and partnership. These societies lived for centuries in shared prosperity, with amazing sophistication in art and technology, and without militaries or violent sanctions. They were finally overrun by neighbouring militant societies, and so their institutions eventually regressed to domination hierarchies.⁷ To reclaim this heritage, to make it a living part of our generation, and do it in a way more powerful than the violent power of the State and capitalism is the challenge before us.

5 William Stringfellow, *An Ethic for Christians and Other Aliens in a Strange Land*, (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1973), p. 18.

6 Andre Gorz, *Farewell to the Working Class*, (Boston: South End Press, 1980), p. 57.

7 Riane Eisler, *The Chalice and the Blade*, (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987).

Social Revolution

Theda Skocpol defines social revolution as "rapid and basic transformations of state and class structures accompanied and in part carried through by revolts from below."⁸ She rightly contends in her classic *States and Social Revolutions* that revolutionary "vanguard" groups have been primarily concerned with rebuilding and strengthening state institutions upon the disintegration of the old regime, in order to carry out economic and other social transformations. For example V.I. Lenin wrote that:

[Marx opposed the Anarchists,] not against the theory of the disappearance of the State when classes disappear...but against the proposition that the workers should deny themselves the use of arms, the use of organized force, that is, *the use of the State*, for the purposes of 'breaking down the resistance of the bourgeoisie.' (emphasis in the original)⁹

In contrast, the grassroots revolts and the active social movements may or may not have been interested in using the hierarchical, bureaucratic, and militaristic powers of the State to achieve their ends. By using state power the vanguard groups perpetuated and strengthened bureaucracy and the military while, as we know today, they failed to overcome and replace capitalism. In essence, the means of the vanguard revolutionary groups have not been consistent with its ends. By so doing the vanguards have time and again become the new elite, the new oppressors, and so hobbled the cause for a true liberation.

After capturing state power in the name of "the people", the revolutionary elite has had a poor record of "representing" popular social forces. The Bolsheviks under Lenin and Trotsky, for example, perverted the self-governing soviets (councils) of peasants, workers and soldiers into puppets for the central government. The Leninist project of building a powerful centralized State to fight the power of the capitalists contradicted the grassroots social project of relatively decentralized self-rule and the direct appropriation of the means of economic production. The

8 Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 4.

9 V.I. Lenin, *State and Revolution*, (New York: International Publishers, 1943), p. 51.

Bolshevik State sought utter domination and so destroyed what beginning attempts were made at the grassroots to establish freedom and democracy.

Social revolution does not have to fit the dominationist mode of production. It is possible to reject reliance on the State and on organized violence to carry out and defend a social revolution. For example, the Nicaraguan Revolution depended for its success upon grassroots, non-violent tactics at least as much as on military tactics.¹⁰ And the Iranian Revolution provided a "text-book" example of the general strike and the power of courageous and massive street demonstrations as effective weapons in a revolutionary struggle.¹¹ Granted, the outcome of both of these social revolutions has not been a liberation from violence or domination, but they do show the power of nonviolent action in the revolutionary situation.

The actual revolutionary moment has time and again caught the vanguard groups by surprise. In fact, these groups have had little to do with the disintegration of the State and other social institutions. The roots of these "politico-military crises of State and class domination," as Skocpol calls them, are found in the structural weaknesses and contradictions of these institutions.¹² The form of these crises include the loss of a war, the failure to effectively address economic crises, a fundamental break between the dominant economic classes and the State, etc. As American abolitionist and radical Wendell Phillips once said, "Revolutions are not made; they come."

If vanguard groups don't significantly create the revolutionary moment, (although there is *some* influence) they have helped guide the course of the struggle after it. These groups have traditionally provided organization, ideology and solidarity for the newly mobilized activists, in addition to forming the predominant State organization.¹³

Jeremy Brecher has observed that "revolutionary movements rarely begin with a revolutionary intention; this only develops in the course of

10 Ricardo Chavarria, "The Nicaraguan Insurrection" in Thomas W. Walker, ed., *Nicaragua in Revolution*, (New York: Praeger, 1982).

11 Farideh Farhi, *States and Urban-Based Revolutions*, (Urbana & Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1990), p. 6.

12 Skocpol, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

13 Skocpol, *op. cit.*, p. 17, 29. See also Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, (New York: Viking, 1965), pp. 263-264.

the struggle itself."¹⁴ A society in the midst of the disintegration of its institutions is one rife with aggrieved social groups. Unsatisfactory responses by the rulers to the demands of the social groups further radicalize the activists. These struggles become revolutionary when the separate causes become coherent, and so coalesce around a guiding ideology and an organizational structure. This coalition-building helps create "free spaces" in the society so further revolutionary developments can occur. When people begin to act for themselves and find the old social institutions in the way, they have historically found themselves with the project of pursuing revolution. It is this dynamic, out of people's experience and activism, that Rosa Luxemburg saw as the true power of social revolution when she criticized the Bolshevik "ready-made formula" for revolution: "socialism can only be born out of the school of its own experience born in the course of its realization..."¹⁵

Luxemburg correctly put her finger on the point where past social revolutions have often gone wrong—the imposition of a plan, institutions, or the revolutionary moment itself on society by a small minority. Only through grassroots action and the formation of parallel institutions does the living forms of revolutionary intent develop. It is only through grassroots activity that any fundamental social change becomes a truly popular change and only there do the habits of a new way of life develop. Palestinian activist Jonathan Kuttab describes the deeply held feelings shared by many in the predominantly nonviolent intifada:

...[it] is really for us as human beings, and for our self worth. It's as much an intifada against our own weakness, our own lethargy, our own fears, our own backwardness and our own structures that had atrophied, as it is against the Israelis.¹⁶

The traditional vanguard groups have tried to short-circuit this social process and thus have usually succeeded in crippling it. Hannah Arendt analyzes the tension between the vanguard groups and the revolutionary

14 Jeremy Brecher, *Strike!*, (Boston: South End Press, 1972), p. 240.

15 As quoted by Martin Oppenheimer, *The Urban Guerrilla*, (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969), p. 56.

16 As quoted by Deena Hurwitz, "The Intifada and Nonviolence", *Fellowship*, June 1990, p. 6.

grassroots groups in *On Revolution*. In one way or another, she writes, in the midst of this tension "the spirit of the revolution [is killed]," and is killed because it "failed to find its appropriate institution."¹⁷ The popular social movements have generally failed to defend themselves against both the old regime and the vanguard groups by failing to independently establish their power.

The importance of grassroots organizations for the success of social revolutions, even those appropriated by vanguard groups, can't be emphasized enough. In Nicaragua it was the autonomous urban neighbourhood organizations that were the "backbone" of the revolution.¹⁸ In Iran this backbone was the bazaar-based organizations.¹⁹ And within the intifada the struggle has been carried on by local community organizations formed independently of the PLO.

The building of grassroots organizations that gradually gain social hegemony and develop (violent or nonviolent) defensive and coercive powers, increasingly poses itself as a full replacement for the disintegrating institutions of the status quo. Leon Trotsky described this situation as one of "dual power."²⁰ When two constellations of institutions vie for sovereignty, instability is the rule until one predominates or a third power intervenes. This is the terrain of power in any social revolution. If the revolutionary structures are able to "deliver the goods" to the people, chances are greatly improved that the people will give their allegiance to the success of the revolution.²¹ The pre-revolutionary work of developing on the grassroots level the practices and forms of these nascent institutions find their full fruition in these situations. The more work accomplished in the pre-revolutionary period, the more experience of making the revolution work is found.

17 Arendt, *op. cit.*, p. 284.

18 See Chavarria, *op. cit.*, p. 31; and Farhi, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

19 Theda Skocpol, "Rentier State and Shi'a Islam in the Iranian Revolution," *Theory and Society*, Vol. 11, 1982, pp. 271-272.

20 Leon Trotsky, *The Russian Revolution*, (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1959), p. 199-201.

21 Jeff Goodwin and Theda Skocpol, "Explaining Revolutions in the Contemporary Third World," *Politics and Society*, Vol. 17, No. 4, Dec. 1989, p. 493.

Revolutionary Social Defense

A key to avoiding the disastrous mistakes of past social revolutions is the formation of "appropriate institutions" that keeps effective power in the grassroots organizations, yet widens and coordinates the power of active solidarity in order to defend against the attacks of the State, capitalism and other domination institutions. Confederalism can fill this need.²² For strong, self-governing communities the confederal forms of solidarity bypass the creation of domination elites as in "representative" governments and yet establish direct democracy as an organized and potent dual power.

One promising appropriate institution within the revolutionary matrix is that of community-controlled social militias engaged in social defense. Brian Martin describes social defense as "nonviolent community resistance to aggression as an alternative to military defense."²³ Social defense is now discussed in Europe and elsewhere under the additional names of civilian-based defense, civilian defense, and nonviolent defense.²⁴ In contrast to the latter theories, social defense advocates generally incorporate structural analyses of society into the concept and look to the grassroots for bringing it into the light of day.²⁵ Martin writes that "social defense is basically defense of the social fabric...features of society, such as freedoms, justice and participation" as compared to the more limited purpose of military defense of protecting territory and the power of the dominant classes. "Social defense is not very good at guarding borders; military defense is not very good at protecting freedoms."²⁶

The creation of social militias would be a most appropriate social revolutionary institution for North America for many reasons, including: it calls for broad citizen participation; it directly expresses grassroots support (or lack of support) for social institutions; it uses weapons that are

22 See Murray Bookchin, "The Meaning of Confederalism," *Our Generation*, Vol. 22, Nos. 1 & 2, Fall 1990—Spring 1991.

23 Brian Martin, *Uprooting War*, (London: Freedom Press, 1984), p. 22.

24 For an overview consult past issues of *Civilian-Based Defense (CBD) News and Opinion*, P.O. Box 31616, Omaha, NE, 68131 USA.

25 For example, see Wolfgang Sternstein, "Strategies of Transition to Social Defense," *CBD News and Opinion*, Vol. 6, No. 1, July-August 1989, p. 8; and Brian Martin, "Gene Sharp's Theory of Power," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 26, No. 2, 1989, p. 213.

26 Brian Martin, "Socialism Without the Military," paper presented at Socialist Scholars Conference, Sydney, Australia, Sept. 28-Oct. 1, 1990, p. 13.

available to anyone at anytime; it is nonviolent; and it already has roots in our social fabric.

Armed civilian militias by comparison are not as appropriate an institution, even though they may come to be seen as a necessary form of struggle. The reasons for this inappropriateness are many: its re-creation of the preeminent domination hierarchy—the military; its inevitable atrocities and repression and the use of these to rally reactionary forces; and its engagement in the vicious cycle of violence of "kill or be killed." Add to these the State's overwhelming superiority in military and domination weapons, its financial resources, its technology, and its intimacy with violence. Even still, armed civilian militias may provide defense of revolutionary projects for a time, but in and of themselves could not be considered a revolutionary form of defense. This name properly belongs to nonviolent social militias.

In the critical phases of revolutionary dual power, when the balance of social power could go in several directions, the regime's military forces play a decisive role. Katherine Chorley insists that "when [modern] troops are exerting their *full* effort it is impossible to win a revolution against them." (emphasis mine)²⁷ For a social revolution to succeed, the power of the State's sanctions must be undercut. However this is not most effectively done historically by a direct head-to-head clash of forces. Chorley instead urges revolutionary groups to

concern itself not so much with inventing the most advantageous organization and technique for [violently] opposing regular troops as with the task of winning over the wavering soldiers by persuasion. At every stage it will work to break down any feeling of military isolation and in its stead build up a sense of the essential solidarity and identity of interest between the army and the people.²⁸

It is by fraternization, persuasion and advocacy of disobedience and resistance within the ranks that the regime's forces are thwarted in the exertion of their full power. And this can only be done when there is no confusion between the humanity of the soldiers and the violent domina-

27 Katherine Chorley, *Armies and the Art of Revolution*, (London: Faber & Faber, 1943), p. 245.
28 *Ibid.*, p. 243.

tion hierarchy they work for, a confusion that is endemic in violent struggles.

Many other notable observers have valued this "indirect" method to defeat an opponent. Sun Tzu, perhaps the greatest military philosopher and strategist ever, wrote circa 500 B.C.E. that "in all fighting, the direct method may be used for joining battle, but indirect methods will be needed in order to secure victory."²⁹ The direct method is acting along the line of natural expectation to reach one's objective while acting along the line of least expectation is the indirect. Thus an armed military force will least expect and be able to respond to a strategy of disciplined and strong nonviolent action, one directed at undermining its purpose, organization and power.

According to military strategist B. H. Liddell Hart, the trouble with the direct method is that it

...consolidates the opponent's balance and thus increases their resisting power. In war, as in wrestling, the attempt to throw the opponent without loosening his (sic) foothold and upsetting his balance results in self-exhaustion...success by such a method only becomes possible through an immense margin of superior strength in some form—and, even so, tends to lose decisiveness.³⁰

The ultimate example of the indirect method of nonviolent power is the technique known as "Schweikism" (after the unlikely hero in Jaroslav Hasek's First World War novel *The Good Soldier Schweik* or *Svejk*). By feigning stupidity and clumsiness, this method actually is a determined non-cooperation with an opponent. If massively applied in many areas of social life, this "go-slow" tactic can cause such great inefficiency and disorder that an authority can lose power, and do so without many individuals risking reprisals by publicly declaring their resistance.

Social militias would likely use strategies similar to those used in guerrilla warfare. On this Liddell Hart comments:

The more general and widespread [nonviolent resistance] is the more difficult it is to deal with. The more the occupying forces can be made to spread, the more complex their problems become. That, I would say, should be the guiding principle in planning civilian defense...As in guerrilla war, so in civilian defense, the principle applies that one should aim for a multiplicity of offensive actions—offensive in the psychological sense, and coupled with multiplicity of human contact with the occupying forces.³¹

The conservation of effort is a central tenet of the strategy of guerrilla warfare. Mao Tse-Tung, echoing Sun Tzu, wrote in 1930, "the enemy advances, we retreat; the enemy camps, we harass; the enemy tires, we attack; the enemy retreats, we pursue."³² If we redefine Mao's "enemy" as the structures, the habits and the social diseases of the domination institutions and not the individuals involved with them, then a revolutionary can both "attack the enemy" and "build up a sense of solidarity between the army and the people." This is the essence of social defense.

Revolutionary movements and dual power institutions do not get created simply out of intellectual speculations, they are prefigured in the practices and struggles of the citizenry in social movements. Contemporary social movements are centrally important for considering radical social change in North America. As Richard Flacks says, "if the Left is understood as a cumulating struggle for the democratization of society, then social movements themselves are the real embodiment of the Left tradition...[for they] are the closest thing we have, in practice, to authentic popular participation."³³

There are many examples of the practices of North American social movements that prefigure revolutionary social defense. They include the aforementioned Detroit neighbourhood fight against crack houses and:

29 Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, (New York: Delacorte Press, 1983), p. 21.

30 B.H. Liddell Hart, *Strategy*, (New York: New American Library, 1974), pp. 5-6. The outcomes of both Persian Gulf Wars, for example, illustrate the truth of this statement.

31 B.H. Liddell Hart, "Lessons from Resistance Movements, Guerrilla and Nonviolent," Adam Roberts, ed., *The Strategy of Civilian Defense*, (London: Faber & Faber, 1967), pp. 206-207.

32 As quoted in Mostafa Rejai, ed., *Mao Tse-Tung on Revolution and War*, (Garden City: Anchor, 1970), p. 236.

33 Richard Flacks, "The Revolution of Citizenship," *Social Policy*, Vol. 21, No. 2, Fall 1990, pp. 41-42.

—The Bay Area Coalition for Our Reproductive Rights (BACORR) and similar groups elsewhere that defend family and women's health clinics from the violence and intimidation of anti-choice groups. BACORR is committed to "the principle of self-defense and direct action...[its] approach is activist and based on direct democracy."³⁴

—The anti-nuclear, anti-war and international solidarity movements who for the past fifteen years have used many forms of nonviolent action to oppose State and corporate violence and domination. In this time tens of thousands of people have been arrested for nonviolently resisting war and its preparations, including over 6000 arrests during the Persian Gulf War.³⁵

—The gays and lesbians who have organized self-defense patrols in their neighbourhoods. They help deter violent attacks by their visible presence, standing up for their dignity, and community education.

—The solidarity effort during the armed standoff between Mohawk Warriors and Canadian authorities at barricades set up on two Quebec highways in the summer of 1990. Blockades sprang up on dozens of highways and railroads throughout Canada, powerlines were downed, public support was expressed, and a truckers association brought food, all in support of the Mohawk cause.

—The radical environmentalists, led by members of Earth First! and the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), who organized the "Redwood Summer" in 1990 to nonviolently defend redwood groves from corporate rape combined with a campaign to win over and organize the timber workers.

³⁴ Tom Burghardt, letter to *Left Green Notes*, No. 8, June/July 1991.

³⁵ For the most complete documentation of these actions consult *The Nuclear Resister*, P.O. Box 43383, Tucson, AZ 85733 USA.

One Revolutionary Scenario

Let me speculate a bit on how revolutionary social defense may evolve in the U.S. and what it may look like in the revolutionary situation. The various grassroots social movements have become for the most part avowedly revolutionary, primarily because their decades of reform effort has yielded few satisfactory results. The various movements have for years argued, discussed, networked, worked in local coalitions, and built solidarity so that a common enemy has been named: violence and domination. Several international networks and confederations have come and gone, but three are regarded as solid and viable. Activist groups have not dropped their particular issues but rather have continued to work for them in harmony with an agreed upon general revolutionary strategy.

In time, war erupts in the Middle East and U.S. troops are involved again, but no clear victor emerges. Meanwhile the federal government budget deficit, still growing since the military buildup in the Reagan era, has caused an acute crisis in the investment sector. Interest rates soar as does inflation and unemployment. Middle class tax protest groups regularly demonstrate in front of local congressional offices to protest the economic crisis. Meanwhile the social movements continue their activity and organizing and have started to dramatically increase their numbers. Efforts are made to fraternize with U.S. troops. In the Middle East peace brigades nonviolently intervene to attempt to stop the fighting.

Congress and the President reach a final impasse on the budget, so the government closes down all "unnecessary" services. Government workers respond by going out on an illegal strike. The war is bloody and drags on longer than promised. The morale of the troops is low with more disobedience and resistance occurring within the ranks. And yet another scandal is revealed in Washington.

At a large, peaceful demonstration in a small city in the Midwest, federal troops unaccountably open fire on the crowd, killing several dozen people. Immediately and around the country large numbers of people take to the streets demanding that the government *do* something. The mass media calls for resignations. Activists begin to organize protests neighbourhood by neighbourhood. Many city and state services close down. Computers across the country are sabotaged and crash.

The revolutionary activists mobilize and put out a call for neighbourhoods and townships to organize themselves in the spirit of Thomas

Jefferson's "ward republics."³⁶ These neighbourhood organizations begin to assume responsibility for police and justice, public welfare and defense. Striking government workers organize themselves and begin to run some public utilities and services. Some cities see rioting and the National Guard. Police, military and paramilitary units kills hundreds in several locations. Some revolutionary armed militias are organized and fight scattered battles. Alternative communication networks form. Activists in the social movements begin to organize massive noncooperation, strikes, occupations and symbolic actions as the protests have moved to insurrection.

Large amounts of capital begins to flee the country. Working feverishly, the revolutionary confederations advocate the practice of nonviolent social defense by the neighbourhood organizations and the newly forming workplace councils. When so decided by the local group, typically a couple of people are elected and given the primary responsibility to educate and train in the strategies and tactics of social defense, to develop and maintain a communications network, to "ring the warning bell" when mobilization is needed, to lead the social militia by example in action, and to represent the group in coordination meetings with other groups. Those elected are strictly accountable to the neighbourhood council, which is open to all who live in the area, and which meets several times a week during this time. Thus the insurrection begins to move toward revolution.

Many problems arise, some unimagined; some are solved, some are not. For example, bank workers occupying their bank try to halt the capital flight but are unable to stop much of it. Nevertheless with the government not functioning, the middle class in disgust, the neighbourhoods and workplaces organizing themselves and uniting into growing confederations, and the courageous and mainly nonviolent resistance, the revolution is succeeding. Only with this fundamental change in the distribution of power can the positive programs the social movements have long advocated have a chance to be fully tried, even in the midst of right-wing terror squads and military coup attempts.

This is of course only one and admittedly optimistic scenario of what is possible. Other serious problems of strategy and process are not included, among them: the potential instability of nonviolent social revolution in

³⁶ See Thomas Jefferson, "Letter to Samuel Kercheval, July 12, 1816," in Merrill Peterson, ed., *The Portable Thomas Jefferson*, (New York: Viking, 1979).

one country, the feasibility of mixing revolutionary violent and non-violent methods, the problems posed by semi-private death squads and paramilitary units, and the difficulties in coordination of action among thousands of local groups.

What Can Be Done

How can the social movements of North America work within the possibilities offered by the institutions of domination while still preparing for the unpredictable social revolution? One solution may be to adopt Leon Trotsky's idea of "transitional demands," or as Andre Gorz puts it, "revolutionary reforms." Gorz, here specifically challenging the worker's movement, wrote:

Instead of dichotomizing the future and the present—future power and present impotence, like Good and Evil—what must be done is to bring the future into the present, to make power tangible *now* by means of actions which demonstrate to the workers their positive strength, their ability to measure themselves against the power of capital and to impose their will on it. [This is done in] the struggle for partial objectives which arise from deep needs and bring into question the capitalist structure, the struggle for partial autonomous (self-managing) powers and their exercise should present socialism to the masses as a living reality already at work...³⁷

This strategy can be and is used by any social movement in their struggle against a particular institution of domination.

Through this strategy the "seeds" of a new society can form and be planted. The living kernel is the experience carried by the people involved in these experiments of the possibilities of life independent of the dominant order. Occasionally these seeds sprout and develop hegemonic powers and even flower into dual power institutions. Such is the case, for example, with the feminist movement and its development of women's

³⁷ Andre Gorz, *Strategy for Labor*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), p. 11.

health clinics, and their defense from anti-choice violence by nonviolent direct action.

Revolutionary social defense and the organization of neighbourhood-controlled social militias is the liberatory analog to the current military (and perhaps police) system. And so community solidarity expressed through nonviolent action would become one of the ultimate sanctions of the revolutionary society, and this is appropriate for only these methods are powerfully consistent with the presumed revolutionary goals of peace, freedom, equality, direct democracy and a sustainable society.

Currently the most exciting and articulate strategy I know for such a social revolution is expressed within the North American Green Movement, more specifically by the Left Green Network (LGN). The LGN Program is under development, but is already showing a broad grasp of what it would take to carry forward a nonviolent and liberatory social revolution.³⁸ The Greens could unite the diverse social movements through a common opposition to violence and domination, and through a common purpose to create a consciously interconnected and sustainable society. This can be done through the formation of grassroots action coalitions, and a shared development of vision, ideology and strategy (always subject to review). Within such coalitions and networks education and discussion about nonviolent power and social defense can be fruitful. A heightened consciousness about the possibilities of nonviolent action by social movements can help liberate further organizational practices and future visions.

Within each local community, groups already engaged in nonviolent action will perhaps come to see themselves as the germinators of social militias by making the possibility of one palpable to the community. The Canberra (Australia) Peacemakers did this by seeking out individuals of strategic social groups in their city, and through interviews researching what they could do in certain given scenarios.³⁹ In this manner the Peacemakers educated people in the community about their potential

38 Program and other literature available from the Left Green Network, P.O. Box 366, Iowa City, IA 52244 USA.

39 Jacki Quilty, Lynne Dickens, Phil Anderson, Brian Martin, *Capital Defense*, (Canberra Peacemakers, GPO Box 1875, Canberra, ACT 2601, Australia, 1986). The strategic social groups included government workers, homemakers, tradespeople, communications workers, students and social activists.

power, gathered important strategic information, and educated themselves on the possibilities of their own community.

Those of us who seek radical social change are not trapped with the methods of parliamentary reform of the liberal parties, individual consciousness change of the New Age movement, armed revolution of the romantic marxist groups, or hopelessness encouraged by the conservatives. There exists a powerful, realistic and already developing alternative: nonviolent social revolution. If such an ideal can never be perfectly or unambiguously practised, it can not be easily dismissed just the same. The fact that nonviolent power has been a successful tool for social change is well-established. Nonviolent power offers us a truly appropriate and liberating form of power for revolutionary change and that looms large in this era of failing marxist revolutions and disintegrating social institutions.

FANATICS OF FREEDOM¹

by Amedeo Bertolo

I am a fanatical lover of freedom.

Mikhail Bakunin

Anarchism is an exaggeration of the idea of freedom.

Karl Popper

I have chosen to begin with these two statements in the hope of capturing the mood both of anarchism and of this essay. The reader should keep them in mind throughout. It is easy to lose oneself in the myriad of definitions of that word, "freedom,"² which is perhaps the most over-used concept in prescriptive political argument.³ Recent events in central and eastern Europe have produced a veritable deluge of references, making it even less valuable, as it has gained usage as the language of political hope in the post-Leninist era. As with paper money, too much leads to a depreciation of its value, and the semantic value of the term, "freedom," is now in danger of plummeting with the speed of a South American

- 1 *I fanatici della liberta*—Paper presented at the seminar "La liberta, le liberta, i libertari" (Freedom, Freedoms and Libertarians), (Milan, 2-3 December, 1989), organised by the Centro Studi Libertari, Milan. In its present form it has been translated by A. Retter, and edited by Frank Harrison. The reader should note that all quotations have been translated from Italian works into English. Consequently, quotations here may differ from their Italian originals—without, however, altering the character of the intellectual content.
- 2 "The meaning of this term...is so porous that it will allow almost any interpretation" (I. Berlin, *Quattro Saggi sulla liberta*, Feltrinelli, Milan, 1988, p. 188). I too would prefer to avoid "discussing either the history or the more than two hundred meanings that have been recorded for this...term." *Ibid.*
- 3 "Freedom is possibly the most frequently used word in political life and doctrine...It tends to be used by all and sundry to designate whatever action, institution, directive or political system that they may hold most dear, from obedience to the law (positive or natural) to economic well-being." (F. E. Oppenheimer, *Dimensioni della liberta*, Feltrinelli, Milan, 1982, p.121)

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currency—or of a currency in the former COMECON bloc! Recently, a right-wing faction of the Movimento Sociale Italiana labelled itself "Fascism and Freedom"—a nice example of black humour, perhaps.

But even fascists do have the right to talk of freedom in one of its distorted forms, called "positive" freedom, freedom to be one's own master.⁴ Stalin and Wojtila have done the same, following Plato or Montesquieu, both of whom removed choice from the dimension of freedom. In Plato's words: "Man becomes free when he moves towards the Good."⁵ Or, in the words of Montesquieu: "Freedom consists in being able to do what one *must* want."⁶

By contrast, the only concepts of freedom that should interest us are those which serve to define the theoretical and practical dimension of freedom in its anarchist sense.

In the flux of contemporary political developments, and the indefinite and multifarious usage of the concept of freedom, it can retain value for anarchists only if we can make it precise in the context of the values that are central to our goals. In so doing we can reaffirm the inexhaustible diversity of anarchism, especially as it confronts liberal democracy. At the same time, we can clarify this diversity, and avoid such indefensible statements as, "From an anarchist point of view dictatorship and democracy are one and the same." Further, we might find in the concept of freedom a "neutral" area which will allow real communication and action between anarchists and non-anarchists. That is, whilst maintaining our identity and separateness from non-anarchists, we shall not appear to be too "unique". Cultural mutants, maybe—but not Martians! We share a great part of the common cultural heritage of humanity, and, in particular, as far as values are considered, European culture—especially the culture of the period since the Enlightenment. There are some differences which are important, indeed *fundamental* to our identity—but only some, after all. Using a

- 4 "By freedom (in a negative sense) I mean not accepting interference by others. The wider the area of non-interference the greater my freedom...Freedom in this sense means 'freedom from'." (I. Berlin, *op. cit.* p. 190) The "positive" meaning of freedom is derived from the individual's wish to be his own master. I want my life and my decisions to depend on me and not on external forces of any type...I want to be a subject, not an object...I want to be the one to decide, not someone to be decided about, to be controlled by myself and not subject to the workings of external nature and other men, as if I was a thing, an animal or a slave." (*Ibid.* 197)
- 5 Quoted in Oppenheimer, *op. cit.*, p. 175.
- 6 Quoted in H. Arendt, *La Crise de la Culture*, Gallimard, Paris, 1989, p. 209, (my italics).

genetic metaphor: our distinction is concerned with but few cultural genes—out of millions.

Further, we should see that a single definition of freedom will not be enough. We need several, although not all can be part of an anarchist concept of freedom. There are different levels, different environments, different contexts which reflect, directly or indirectly, the anarchist concept of freedom in both its descriptive and prescriptive contexts, its organizational and its ethical purposes.

II

Max Planck stated that, "the problem of freedom goes straight to the heart of that dark wood in which philosophy has disappeared."⁷ We are looking for a path to it, which may be hard to find. In Hannah Arendt's words,

to raise the question of "what is freedom" seems an impossible task...In its simplest form the difficulty can be summarized in the contradiction between our conscience which tells us we are free and therefore responsible, and our everyday experience of the world around us, in which we are directed by the principle of cause and effect.⁸

In 1963, I was a member of a group of anarchists who founded and produced, albeit briefly, a periodical entitled *Materialism and Freedom*. As we were (or felt we were) materialists and, at the same time, considered ourselves (and were) profoundly libertarian, we considered that there could not, indeed *should* not, be any contradiction between the two things. Had Bakunin himself not talked of the "materialistic conception of freedom"? If the "grand old man" said it...At that time I was twenty-two.

Today, the "materialistic conception of freedom" seems to me to be a far more complex philosophical problem than we then believed. In particular, I see freedom (not just in the "anarchist" sense, but freedom pure and simple) as incompatible with the reductionist concept of mechanistic

⁷ Quoted in Arendt, *op cit.*, p. 188.

⁸ Arendt, *op cit.*, p. 186.

materialism that we so boldly proclaimed. Who today can be so confident about the nature of reality, when we are no longer sure what is even the nature of matter—when faced with the complex hypotheses at sub-atomic and astrophysical ends of the spectrum of scientific interpretations.⁹

Nevertheless, I still consider myself to be a "materialist," in spite of a candid admission of uncertainty concerning this philosophical term. This "materialist" is, and probably always was, to be seen to hold Popperian "realism of common sense."¹⁰ I am a materialist to the degree that, unlike the various types and degrees of idealists, I see "matter" (in the sense of the physical world) as a necessary theoretical model of reality; but also that reason might explain and transform that reality—remembering always that our instruments of reason are, of course, quite different from instrumental rationality.

If we want to find a rational explanation of "things", we must continue to cope with the persisting problem of the relationship between determinism and freedom. If reality is to be reduced to purely deterministic relationships, how can freedom exist and be conceived? If everything is determined, then freedom of choice—of every choice—is purely apparent, no more than a way of describing our ignorance of all the causes that have *necessarily* determined that sequence of phenomena that we have chosen. To be free, therefore, means modifying or rejecting absolute determinism.¹¹

There is a watered-down version of determinism, also called "auto-determinism" (although it has little to do with what I will later be terming self-determination) which is interesting, almost convincing, from the point

⁹ It is worthwhile considering Karl Popper in this context, as he has attempted a useful approach to reality that is neither monistic (all is matter/all is spirit) nor dualistic (matter/spirit). Popper distinguishes three levels of reality, which he terms World 1, World 2, World 3. World 1 is the world of physics, chemistry and biology; World 2 of psychology (both human and animal), that of fear, hope, the impulse to act, of all types of subjective experience, including those of the subconscious and the unconscious; World 3 is the world of the products of the human mind (works of art, ethical values, social institutions, scientific works, books, theories—including the false ones as Popper is quick to specify). This World 3, which only begins with the evolution of a distinctive human language ("in the beginning there was the Word and the Word was man", one might say) is every bit as real as Worlds 1 and 2, and its "objects" are in "close interaction" with those of the other two levels of reality. (See K. Popper, "L'Indeterminisme n'est pas suffisant", in *L'Univers irresolu*, Hermann, Paris, 1984, pp. 93-107).

¹⁰ "While, along with Doctor Johnson, Alfred Lande and other sensible realists, I hold that the World 1 (see preceding note) is the real model of reality, I am not for this reason a monist but rather a pluralist." (K. Popper, *op cit.*, p. 107)

¹¹ "If man is free so, at least in part, will nature be as well" (Popper, *op cit.*, p. 105); and, "Our universe is partly causal, partly probabilistic and partly open." (*ibid.*, p. 107)

of view of a "libertarian materialist"—but it is still not quite enough. This soft determinism, as one critic has referred to it,¹² is summarised as follows by Berlin:

The nature and the structure of the personality, the emotions, attitudes, choices, decisions and other acts that occur would play a fundamental role in what happens, but would therefore be the result of causes, whether psychological or physical, social or individual, which in their turn are effects of other causes and so on in an uninterrupted succession.

According to the best-known version of this doctrine, I am free if I can do what I want to...However my choice is itself causally determined, because if not it would be a *chance* event.¹³

Chance is the *bete noire* of the determinists, both hard and soft. While I have always felt close to the determinists' position it seems to me that the solution to the philosophical dilemma of freedom can only start with the introduction of "chance" at the side of causal determination.

Chance has been a category of thought since ancient times,¹⁴ swept disdainfully aside by modern science (in theory if not in practice) as mere ignorance of the relationships of cause and effect, until less than a century ago. Then quantitative indeterminism and the subsequent developments in physics and genetics brought it back into question, not only at a sub-atomic level but also at the macro-molecular one. So chance seems to have been firmly ensconced at the side of cause and effect as a "scientific" fact, breaking into the causal chain.

This is not yet freedom, however. The indeterminism of chance (although probability may go some way to reducing it to the domain of the determinable) is no more freedom than is causal determination.¹⁵ The two

12 W. Jones, quoted in Berlin, *op cit.*, p. 13.

13 *Ibid.*

14 "Everything that exists in the universe is the fruit of chance and of necessity." (Democritus, quoted in Monod, *Il Caso e la necessita'*, Mondadori, Milano, 1986, p. 9)

15 "Despite the protests of Einstein, quantum mechanics has introduced what may be termed a 'god playing dice'... [But] the indeterminism of the laws of probability, does not, of itself, lead to human liberation. What we are seeking to understand is not how we can act in an unpredictable and fortuitous fashion but rather how we can act deliberately and rational-

together, however, can be seen as the necessary *pre-conditions* of freedom, the logically necessary conditions for choice at a human, i.e. socio-cultural, level.

Freedom, understood as individual or collective choice of behaviour from among various possibilities, in the face of a certain state of things,¹⁶ calls for both an openness to behaviour which is *equally* compatible with i) the pre-established state of things, and ii) the voluntary intervention into its determinable elements.

Chance can also be seen from the active human perspective as a sort of physical predecessor of freedom;¹⁷ which is also to say that there must emerge a variable human nature, an animal whose behaviour is *essentially* not determined by the "laws" of biology.¹⁸ It is true that other species of animals also exhibit behaviour which is in some degree voluntary, "free," but it is only in the human species that this dimension of freedom, of the voluntary nature of behaviour, has become *essential*, characteristic and identifying.

In the natural history of the human species, freedom emerged as a new dimension of reality between causality and chance. Freedom is neither determinism nor the aforementioned indeterminism of chance. It is *self-determination*; and it is at this point that socio-historical *creation* takes over from the simple interaction between chance and necessity in the development of human experience.¹⁹

In the course of the development of humanity, instinct has come to play with an ever-decreasing role,²⁰ and has been replaced by culture, that is by

ly...Indeterminism is necessary but, in itself, is insufficient to bring about human freedom and creativity." (K. Popper, *op. cit.*, p. 102-103)

16 This definition is virtually the same as that of Ludovico Geymonat, (*La liberta'*, Rusconi, Milano, 1988, p. 27), whose ideas on liberty have been of little assistance overall.

17 Moreover, we can also accept the ideas of a "creativity" of nature which goes beyond pure chance and which can be considered as the *matrix*, to use Murray Bookchin's term (*The Ecology of Freedom*, Black Rose Books, Montréal, 1991), of creativity and so of human freedom, but which is not totally identifiable with the latter.

18 "Recent research in anthropology suggests that the prevailing view that the mental dispositions of men are genetically prior to culture...is incorrect...the final stages of the biological evolution of man occurred after the initial stages of the growth of culture [and] implies that...tools, hunting, family organization, and, later, art, religion, and 'science' molded man somatically." (Clifford Geertz, quoted in A. Montagu (ed.), *Man and Aggression*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1973, p. 15) Therefore, "man's brain began to grow and develop in a simultaneous feedback interaction with culture." (Montagu, *ibid.*)

19 See C. Castoriadis, "L'imaginaire: la creation dans le domain social-historique", in *Domaines de l'homme*, Vol II, Seuil, Paris, 1986, pp. 219-237.

20 "Under the selection pressures exerted by the necessity to function in the dimension of

diversity into a category in itself, and raising it to the ranks of specific values, equality ceases to be its negation.

This is not simply playing with words, but is rather a semantic operation very much in line with our anarchist tradition, and even with the most honest liberal tradition. Anarchists have always seen diversity as implicit in freedom considered as a value, as our inevitable individualism, our obvious "extravagance," continually demonstrates in practice. It is also in the best liberal tradition, as when John Stuart Mill wrote that his writings on freedom "form a sort of philosophical manual of a single truth...that is to say the importance for man and for society of a *wide variety of characters* and of a complete freedom for human nature to develop in innumerable different directions."²⁴

Making explicit that which is implicit, as I have suggested before,²⁵ means that we should see diversity—understood as difference devoid of any hierarchical connotations—as a value in itself, which is to give value to an incontrovertible fact of nature: the infinite diversity of reality.²⁶ Environmentalists and feminists perform an analogous operation. (*At the same time* the negative value of inequality, of difference endowed with hierarchical elements, must also be stressed).

At this point we are left with equality as a value cleansed of ambiguity, a value reduced to its essential form of *qualitative* equality: equality in freedom. This does not, of itself, obviate the quantitative dimension of equality as defined by Castoriadis: "arithmetic" ("possessed equally by all") and "geometric" ("to each according to...", "in proportion to...").²⁷ However, this quantitative dimension can be reduced to applications which are only partial, and can be debated in the light of qualitative

24 Quoted in G. Giorello, "Introduzione to J. Stuart Mill", *Saggio sulla liberta*, Il Saggiatore, Milano, 1984, p. 7. But, following the liberal, we can turn to what contemporary Italian marxists write: "We must free...difference from its hierarchical element." (R. Gagliardi in *Il Bimestrale*, a supplement to *Il Manifesto*, 31-1-1989); and, "Egalitarianism in social practice, in the concrete dimension of its conflicts and micro-conflicts, has never [well!!! (A.B.)] attacked difference but rather hierarchy, never a world of diverse beings but one made up of inferiors and superiors, of rulers and subjects, *inequality as a principle of command and a system of Domination*." (M. Bascetta in *Il Bimestrale*, *ibid.*). (My italics [A.B.]; for I feel like I am dreaming and reading the words of an anarchist!)

25 A. Bertolo, "La gramigna sovversiva", in *Interrogations*, no. 17-18, 1979, pp. 26-27.

26 "Each infant differs from the others: no two, except for identical twins, share a common gene, and even identical twins may differ phenotypically because of gestational inequalities." L. Eisenberg, In Montagu (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 65.

27 C. Castoriadis, "Nature et valeur de l'egalite", in *L'exigence d'egalite*, de la Baconniere, Neuchatel, 1982, p. 321.

equality—which is equality with respect to power and, therefore, also freedom.²⁸ Even such a self-confessed enemy of equality as Raymond Polin can admit this:

It is true that even I hold it to be undeniable that men are born free, that is to say capable of freedom, and also that they are born fitted to exist in freedom. The capacity for freedom and awareness, which are in fact one and the same thing, is the very essence of human nature. It does follow that men must be considered equal in their capacity to be free.²⁹

Nonetheless, in order to be equally free, human beings must be equal. Equality must be seen as a value if we are to proceed further.

But now what of fraternity (brotherhood/sisterhood) or, in a more modern way, of solidarity, the Cinderella of the revolutionary triad? For me it seems only slightly problematical, in the context of the present discussion of freedom.

It is clearly difficult to imagine such an eminently social animal as ourselves existing without a wide and growing practice of mutual aid.³⁰ The autonomy of individual human beings needs to coexist with social *interdependence* (yet another term which is quite rightly dear to environmentalist thought). But solidarity is also necessary at the level of the pursued values, as the "cement" of freedom, equality and diversity, to ensure that freedom does not decline into indifference, and diversity does not become inequality. It also must ensure that justice is not blind, avoiding what as Bookchin calls an inequality of equals, an "inequality in fact" of "equals in right," and safeguarding the differences of, and means for, an equality of diversity. Solidarity is necessary to give a sense of coherence to the seeming paradox of "the communitarian individualism," to which Alan Ritter effectively reduces the conceptual nucleus of anarchism.³¹

This call for a sense of community, however, must not lead us away from the fact that anarchist solidarity is not limited to small units. It goes

28 A. Bertolo, *Power, Authority and Domination*, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

29 R. Polin, "Les deux soeurs ennemies: egalite et liberte", in *L'exigence d'egalite*, *op. cit.*, p. 277.

30 See, obviously, P. Kropotkin, *Il Mutuo Appoggio*, Salerno, Rome, 1982.

31 A. Ritter, "L'individuo comunitario", *Volunta'*, 1/84.

beyond the family, the clan, the lodge, the corporation, or the nation, to take in the entire human species, although *inevitably* in a series of concentric circles of decreasing intensity (and with particular importance given to the weakest). The intensity of this solidarity may decrease but its nature remains unchanged, never becoming extraneous.

IV

Such is a skeleton outline of the context of the anarchist interpretation of the value, freedom. The first step in putting meat on these bones may be found in the Bakunin writings. This "intellectual homage" is not in any way a bowing to an *auctoritas*, but simply a product of the fact that I have quite honestly failed to find anything better—even though Bakunin's definitions are partially intuitive (and must be understood intuitively) rather than being wholly explicable by logic.

Moreover, the anarchist conception of freedom, in its fundamental nature, probably lies outside the scope of logical analysis, and cannot be reduced to a precise and complete rational definition. It is almost intangible and can only be explained in metaphors. While far from assuming the mantle of mysticism, even I, atheist and rationalist since my early adolescence, must concede—a little—in front of the refusal of the fundamental principles of my system of values to bow completely to logic. I am in no way concerned by this. Bakunin said that freedom is first and foremost aesthetic, a passion, before it is political; and even, perhaps, before it is ethical. The grand old man said, "I am a fanatical lover of freedom." A lover! This brings us entirely within the aesthetical dimension, the realm of "feeling." I like freedom, I love it—and would even, in the last resort, die for it.

But, getting back to the more tangible, if still slippery level of the ethical-political, Bakunin said,

I can say I feel free only in the presence of other men and in relationship to them...I am only free and human insofar as I recognise the freedom and the humanity of those around me...A slave owner is not a man but a master.

Then, going to the heart of the matter,

...the freedom of others if far from being a limit to or a denial of mine, on the contrary it is a necessary condition which confirms it. I can only be truly free through the freedom of others so that, the more free men around me, the wider, deeper and more far-reaching their freedom, the wider, deeper and more far-reaching is my own.³²

And yet again,

I am speaking of that freedom in which each individual, rather than feeling limited by the freedom of others, finds in this his own confirmation and his gateway to infinity.³³

What then is this freedom which produces an effect of "collective force,"³⁴ so that the final result when individual freedoms are added together is greater than their sum—much like that which Proudhon described for the economy? Clearly, it is *anarchist freedom* which is *closely and necessarily* tied to equality, solidarity and diversity;³⁵ *strong* equality,³⁶ *strong* solidarity, *strong* diversity. It is this "strength"³⁷ which makes them compatible, in contrast with the feeble conceptions of freedom and equality which weaken each other, retaining and even reinforcing their seeming contradictions.³⁸

32 M. Bakunin, "Dio e lo Stato", in *Rivolta e Libertà* (ed. M. Nejrrotti), Editori Riuniti, Rome, 1973, pp. 55-56.

33 *Ibid.*, p. 71.

34 With this question I would also like to say that Bakunin's definition is not at all a judgement based on fact. That is to say that it is not freedom that causes "collective force," but that a freedom can do so (*the anarchist one*: "my freedom grows rather than diminishes with the freedom of others") if it becomes a central element in the imagined institution of society.

35 Bakunin again: "the unlimited freedom of each by means of the freedom of all; freedom through solidarity, freedom and equality." *Ibid.*

36 An "exaggerated" freedom, as Popper says. (*Società aperta, universo aperto*, Borla, Roma, 1984, p. 26)

37 Or, as Nico Berti said, in their "ulteriorisation." ("La dimensione utopica del pensiero anarchico", *Volontà* 3/81). And again: "For anarchists, individual freedom can only be truly realised through the complete generalisation of social equality and social equality can only be fully realised through the complete generalisation of individual freedom." ("Anarchism: Towards an Historical Balance Sheet" in *Thinking as Anarchists*, Centro Studi Libertari, 1985)

38 The use of the adjectives, strong and weak, may be misleading as it seems to indicate a purely quantitative difference; whereas, while certainly quantitative features of freedom, equality, etc. can be measured, it is, above all, *qualitative*.

V

For our next step towards a more complete formal definition of the anarchist conception of freedom, it may be useful to distinguish between two categories which roughly correspond to the "public" and the "private" spheres.

This distinction is more logical than real. The juxtaposition of "freedom *in* politics" and "freedom *from* politics," to use Arendt's terms,³⁹ is not important here. The anarchist conception brings together, in Benjamin Constant de Rebeque's terms, the ancient and the modern ideas of freedom.⁴⁰ They are brought together but not merged. They *must*, perhaps, remain formally distinct if, as Norberto Robbio tells us, "the problem of freedom is how to act in such a way that we can distinguish a public sphere and a private one, so that man is not entirely reduced to the citizen."⁴¹

Thus we have two manifestations of the same phenomenon:

1) Freedom as self-determination of the human being, of all concrete individual human beings; human beings determine and realise themselves by actively and *directly* participating in the process of cultural determination, of socio-historical creation, the deciding process of the "political" sphere.

2) Freedom as individuals also determine and realise themselves by their choices in the "private" sphere—that is, in everything that has to do with individual life styles.

The former sphere, the public or "political," is that of the generalised grid of social determinations of behaviour. And these determinations will *not* be external or extraneous to (imposed on) the individual if s/he participates in their continual creation and re-creation (modification or confirmation) on a basis of equality. Only thus is the second sphere, the "private," not the last refuge of freedom (a "privatized" freedom), but rather the sphere of

39 H. Arendt, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

40 "The ancient citizens wanted the division of social power between all the citizens of a State: this was what they called freedom...The modern aim is the safeguarding of private well-being and freedom is seen as the guarantee that the institutions offer for this well-being." (B. Constant, "De la liberte' des anciens comparee a celle des modernes", 1819, quoted in C. Viviani, *Enciclopedia filosofica*, p. 102)

41 Quoted in C. Viviani, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

another facet of freedom, that of individual freedom within the network of collective freedom—or rather, as the term "collective" freedom may be ambiguous, the collective "game of freedom." I use the word "game" intentionally as all games have rules (although we may invent new ones).⁴² (There are, of course, games which are almost completely governed by chance, but they are the least enjoyable.)

So the juxtaposition of freedom *in* politics and *from* politics has nothing to do with us (as anarchists) but is a dilemma which only faces those who see politics (the public sphere, social norms) as the sphere of non-freedom, prescribed by those who want everything to be controlled, decided and predictable, and see individual freedom as an absurd claim, an intolerable disorder. But for anarchists, as Elisee Reclus said, "anarchism is the highest form of order."

The problem of the distinction between "negative" and "positive" freedom, between "freedom *from*..." and "freedom *to*..." is similarly resolvable.

Taken by itself, if authentic freedom is freedom to move towards the Good, an end that may be defined in innumerable ways both religious and secular, everything is possible in the name of "real", positive freedom—including the gulags and the Inquisition. However, a purely negative conception of freedom is equally liable to mystification, particularly because it undervalues or even deprives individuals (in the game of freedom) of that sphere of power, of functions instituted and controlled by society, which is fundamental to our humanity, to our being fully human. And even in the private sphere we are likely to see the return of an *internalised* pseudo-freedom in the form of freedom *from*: *from* sin, or *from* our worse nature, or *from* petty-bourgeois individualism, or *from* frustration, etc.⁴³

It is probably true that positive freedom and negative freedom have generally developed historically in different directions.⁴⁴ But it is not true, it is in fact absolutely false, in the case of anarchism, which represents the

42 "...a system of conditional checks which allows the establishment of rules of the game which are able to cope with a considerable number of combinations of actions and wishes, without the threat of a radical rupture of the entire system with opportunities for qualitative transgression and complete renewal of the rules of the game which preside over the formation of a new and different system of freedom." (F. Riccio, S. Vaccaro, E. Fiordilino, *Il sapere e le sue parole*, Ila Palma, Palermo, 1989, p. 158)

43 If freedom is "the absence of obstacles in the way of satisfaction of a person's wishes...one way of achieving this freedom is to overcome one's own desires...Rather than resisting the pressures crushing me or removing them, I can 'interiorize' them." (Berlin, *op. cit.*, p. 37)

44 Berlin, *op. cit.*, p. 198.

historically most complete synthesis of the two "freedoms." To the anarchists, both freedoms have always been closely and strongly linked. They are, as Berlin says, "Two ways of saying essentially the same thing."

To return to Bakunin, we look to

...not that individualistic, egoistic, narrow-minded, sham freedom practised by the school of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and by all the other school of bourgeois liberalism, which consider *the so-called rights of all, represented by the State*, as the limits on the individual and which inevitably ends by reducing the right of the *individual* to zero...No, I mean...the freedom that consists of the full development of all material, intellectual and moral activities that are latent in *each and every one of us*.⁴⁵

VI

This brings us to the final knot to be unravelled in my train of thought (although obviously not to the end of the never-ending discussion of freedom). This concerns the possibility of what might be called a "lay conception" of freedom, acceptable to different "faiths." I used the term "neutral" earlier in this essay, but perhaps that implies a contradiction with the concept of freedom itself as a moral goal.⁴⁶ The question is: Can there be a conception of freedom which allows communication and action, including *but not limited to* (and herein lies the problem) the specific anarchist conception of freedom?

Since we pose the question we must obviously accept the idea that there is *no one true* conception of freedom (that is, ours). Our anarchist idea is "obviously" (for me at least) the most beautiful, the richest, the most promising, the most in line with human nature. But it is not the only one nor, unfortunately, is it the most widespread in the collective imagination today—indeed far from it. It is not difficult to see that the anarchist con-

⁴⁵ Bakunin, *op. cit.*, p. 70. (My italics—A.B.)

⁴⁶ It is, of course, possible to look for (and perhaps find) a neutral definition of freedom, but only if we consider it to be a non-ethical term—as Oppenheimer, for example, tries to do. But a definition of this type has no sense and no usefulness in the context that interests us. We are concerned with freedom as a value, and with *one particular* conception of it.

ception is not and *cannot* be the only conception of freedom, because freedom, by its very nature, cannot be reduced to one particular interpretation without denying itself.⁴⁷ So we must determine whether or not the anarchist conception of freedom is not only essentially different, but also incompatible with other conceptions.

If we apply to this dilemma the mix of utopian imagination and common sense that I suggested to anarchists some years ago,⁴⁸ there is one almost inevitable reply: the freedom of the anarchists is *fundamentally* different from other freedoms, however similar they may seem (this being the utopian dimension), but at the same time it is *compatible* with them (the dimension of common sense). I believe that there may be a lay idea of freedom in which different conceptions, including the anarchist one, can confront each other and "coexist." *Some* (e.g., the fascist interpretation, or the Leninist) would automatically be excluded once this lay dimension of freedom has been more or less defined—but not all.

So, how to define it? This is not an easy task, partly because I have only just started to think about it. We need definitions which are not overly broad, as otherwise everything could be included, from Wojtila's "freedom is wanting what must be" (1983) to "the freedom to be enslaved by your beautiful black (or blue or green) eyes" of the poets. So not overly broad, but obviously acceptable in principle to various doctrinal approaches. In view of my cultural make-up, I am thinking of the other two great schools of post-enlightenment thought, liberalism and socialism (including but not limited to the Marxist variety). So I am seeking definitions which can appeal to the less hierarchical minds of these two traditions, to their genuine libertarian (and/or egalitarian) natures.

We might start with Berlin:

Anyone who sees a value in freedom in itself has believed that freedom of choice is an inalienable element of what makes human beings human. This is the underlying factor in both the positive demand for a voice in the law and practices of the society in which one lives, and in the demand for a personal space...in which one is *one's own master*.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ See N. Berti, "Liberta' dell'etica ed etica della liberta'", *Volunta'*, 1/1987.

⁴⁸ A. Bertolo, "Gli ex, il buon senso e l'utopia", *Volunta'* 3/85.

Freedom is also a

...negative space in which a man is not obliged to account for his actions to anyone else as long as this can be compatible with the existence of an organised society.⁵⁰

Although a somewhat "weaker" version than the anarchist one, here it includes both freedom as participating in power and freedom as the arbitrariness of individual choice (limited only by the "equal freedom of others"). It is, or could be, a basis for a constructive dialogue, together with a series of struggles for freedom, for individual and collective freedom, in the "private" and the "public." We might then move progressively towards a wide-spread acceptance of the anarchist conception of freedom, while still remaining within the lay context.⁵¹

"Having a voice" in politics may quite well lead to direct democracy in the political sphere (that is to say the negation of the State as a principle of hierarchical organization).⁵² "Equal freedom" may provide equality and lead quite logically to self-management in the economic sphere. And the limit of the freedom of others may, also quite logically, come to seem a pseudo-limit. We may well discover and prove, both in theory and in practice, that the equal freedom of all may not reduce but rather reinforce the freedom of each, of all and of everyone.

As, after all, that grand old man, Bakunin, asserted!

49 My italics are to highlight the internal contradiction (an involuntary "slip"—possibly a significant lapse, on libertarian ground). Berlin in fact cites being one's own master as a category in the order of "positive" freedom and not in the "negative" as in this sentence.

50 Both these quotations are found in Berlin, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

51 And then perhaps to its establishment (necessarily traumatic/revolutionary, as it is incompatible with the principle of domination) as a central element in the imaginary institution of society.

52 "Anyone who is for freedom must be for being governed as little as possible and for having the least possible government, and so to moving towards the absence of government, towards anarchism." (K. Popper, *Societa' aperta, universo aperto*, p. 26) "Participation in self-government is, like justice, a fundamental human need." (I. Berlin, *op. cit.*, p. 55)

BOOK REVIEW

Lynne Segal, *Slow Motion: Changing Masculinities, Changing Men*
Virago Press, London, 1990

reviewed by Natalie Klym

Lynne Segal's *Slow Motion* is a well-informed, comprehensive exploration into the world of men and the construction of 'masculinity'. While much of current gender theory attempts to reconsider the concept of gender itself by focusing primarily on deconstructing 'femininity' and 'womanhood', *Slow Motion* is one of the newer studies to emerge from feminist theory that deals specifically with maleness and its implications, both within the male sphere and its relationship to the female. Segal explores the changing nature of men's lives in an attempt to shift our viewing of the category 'masculine' to the pluralistic idea of masculinities. Her approach is in part a reaction to not only the focus on woman as "the object of scrutiny" both within feminism and patriarchy, but also on the focus, primarily within feminism, on the 'evilness' of men. For too long 'men' have been taken for granted as both static and universal, not to mention quite adequately trashed. This in itself reveals the extent to which some feminist theories have been operating within the same ideological framework of the universal male which has consequently produced the 'female' as 'other'. Although some theories argue that this is ultimately the consequence of an inherently phallogocentric language, Segal believes that understanding men is the necessary counterpart to changing the place of women in society. She does not see 'man' as being the referential sex and sets out to disperse the universality of 'maleness' to expose masculinity as a product of gender construction, just like femininity, regardless of which forces may be responsible for its creation. She considers men as much 'victims' of patriarchy as women, without denying their privileged status.

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She places much of the blame on capitalist society for encouraging and perpetuating sex roles and behaviour which oppress primarily women, but men also, and thus her prescriptions for solution lie "clearly stated in the goals of socialist feminism."

Segal's vision involves a wholehearted concern for "equality between the sexes," however, as this statement itself reveals, a journey that begins with a critical look at the history of masculinity in particular and gender in general, ends quite surprisingly with the two genders, (men and women) intact—however much their respective character traits and roles have been theoretically expanded.

Segal's socialist feminist solution appears somewhat unexpectedly and seemingly out of place in her concluding sections. Although the economic and political changes that she prescribes may alleviate the poverty and powerlessness of certain social groups, she places too much emphasis on economic factors and their relationship to gender. Effectively, Segal is attempting to analytically place gender immediately within an economic system in order to justify her socialist solution to sexism, rather than analyzing gender as an order in itself—which capitalism exploits—and one that is more closely related to a system of sexuality.

Segal seeks to destroy gender *hierarchy*, but not gender and therefore not gender *order*. As far as 'masculinity' and 'gender' are concerned, her personal vision is not very radical in the end, nor does her book come fully to terms with the relationship between biological sex and gender. In contrast with analyses like those found in Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* for example, which attacks gender to its core to reveal a politics of 'identity', Segal's discussion and incorporation of identity is weak—despite the fact that she does raise the issue.

Similarly, her analysis of the State is practically non-existent, even though she describes and refers to violent State practices. Not dealing with the 'State' is both a reflection and a cause of her failure to deal adequately with more general issues of 'power'.

Most of these problems do not become apparent until her last chapters. Up to this point, the book, for the most part, is an excellent synthesis of feminist theories and the history of changing sex roles, and the reader is quickly captivated by a very easy reading style. It is not primarily a theoretical work as such, but incorporates the philosophies of Foucault, Freud, Lacan, Dworkin, MacKinnon, Brownmiller, Benjamin: virtually anyone who has had anything to say pertaining to sexuality and/or

feminism. Her first few chapters examine the recent history of sex roles, starting with the 1950s, a time when they were perhaps the most rigidly defined and entrapping. Her insightful descriptions identify the development of two opposing faces of masculinity—the family man and the war-time hero. She stresses the restrictions imposed on men and the meanings of masculine behaviour, pointing out that the most unacceptable forms are those which resemble 'femininity', and therefore stem from the same misogyny that acceptable male behaviour reinforces. Likewise, links are drawn between misogyny and homophobia. She points to the separate spheres of work and home, and the resulting social distance and antagonism between men and women. This corresponds to what she repeatedly refers to as the division between public and private life.

She continues with an analysis of fatherhood, proposing new possibilities of balancing the best of both worlds—the public and the private—and how to 'de-gender' these realms which have traditionally been masculine and feminine respectively. However, in doing so, she seems to take heterosexuality and the family unit, in whatever form, for granted here, and there is no mention of gay parenting, or other alternative forms of childrearing practices.

Starting in Chapter 3, "Shrinking the Phallus," she begins to dig deeper into the construction of masculinity and sex roles for an explanation of men's power over women. Chapter 4, "Asserting Phallic Mastery," explores phallic order, Lacan and the limits of his theories. Segal gives an interesting critique of symbolic power and also of gender systems.

Once the origins of masculinity have been uncovered and discussed, she moves on to describing "Competing Masculinities," historically locating 'manliness'. Here she gives an even more in-depth character analysis of various types of men than in earlier chapters, only now interestingly exposes some of the contradictions within masculinity. For example, she reveals that while on the one hand, militarism symbolises macho qualities such as aggression, violence, power, etc., and therefore appears to be a form of "hyper masculinity," it is also based on the traditionally conceived, as 'feminine' characteristics of obedience, following, service, etc. This, along with the succeeding chapter, "Traitors to the Cause," which discusses homosexuality at length, produces a picture of masculinity that is much more complex and precarious than phallic mythology would have us believe. She makes some interesting remarks on homophobia, stating that its misogynistic nature seeks to regulate the whole spectrum of male be-

haviour—however her overall critique of homosexuality is simplistic and she does not address misogyny that exists within the gay male community, nor the regulation of desire and behaviour gay men are subjected to within their own 'culture'. The third part of "Competing Masculinities" deals specifically with Black masculinity and racism to further expose "the conflict and chaos at the heart of the dominant ideal of masculinity." She demonstrates the parallels between racism and sexism ("the homology of the 'black' and the 'feminine'") and concludes with a discussion of Black feminism and sexism within the Black community, thereby exploring the many layers and intersections of various forms of oppression.

The last two chapters before her concluding one are perhaps the most powerful and are appropriately titled "The Belly of the Beast (I) Sex as Male Domination?" and "The Belly of the Beast (II) Explaining Male Violence." These still remain the most controversial issues for feminism and any theories dealing with sexuality. It is at this point that her lack of a useful analysis of sexuality and gender as related constructs, becomes apparent, and during the latter part of this section Segal shifts to a focus on more economically related concerns.

She begins first of all with a discussion of various feminist writings, locating male sexuality in the scheme of male dominance. While Catharine MacKinnon posits that sexuality is the basis for male dominance, Andrea Dworkin claims that male sexual dominance is at the heart of all other power relations. In either case, male sexuality is seen as an omnipotent inherent evil, a model which Segal proceeds to reject. Segal successfully challenges the inherentness of the 'violence', thereby introducing the idea that sexual meanings are produced by social forces. She points out the prevalence of images and discourses of dominance/submission models of heterosexuality and cleverly cautions against

assuming an equation between such sado-masochistic discourse and people's lived experience of sexuality. *Internal* and *external* meanings are not always identical. Our experiences do not simply mirror social meanings, though they are inevitably filtered through them. (my emphasis)

From where do these discourses emerge—what and where exactly is the "internal"? Is she assuming that there is a pure, 'unfiltered' sexuality that somehow becomes tainted by social meaning? Although revealing how

sexuality becomes invested with socially constructed meanings is very significant, her analysis does not see sexuality itself *as* discourse, as opposed to being *defined by* discourse. Her assumption here would seem to imply that the sado-masochistic discourse constructs heterosexual sex in a particular way, but heterosexuality itself must exist as a 'concept' before it can be attributed with meaning. Foucault would argue:

If sexuality was constituted as an area of investigation, this was only because relations of power had established it as a possible object, and conversely, if power was able to take it as a target this was because techniques of knowledge and procedures of discourse were capable of investing it. (Foucault, p. 98)

Segal's discussion of the meaning and power in sexuality is extensive. She examines the power of the phallus and its role as the symbol of the whole configuration of male dominance and reveals how male sexual performance becomes the "mainstay of masculine identity." In this way, she successfully identifies sex as a semiotic system and the various meanings within it, and how they are socially constructed and tolerated. Her argument though, does not take into account the construction of sexuality itself and its deployment. When she proposes that an equation between socially constructed meaning and sexuality *not* be assumed, thus severing the links between social meanings and lived experience, Segal implicitly assumes 'sexuality' in her analysis. But does, or could, sexuality exist in this isolated way, or is it not part and parcel of the whole construction, links and all?

The 'essentialism' of sexuality as male dominance has been exposed as myth, but the location of sexuality remains ambiguous in Segal's analysis. Consequently, the nature and origins of gender, an integral element in this construct, remains blurred as well. Gender as a crucial relative variable in a system of compulsory heterosexuality that relies heavily on its *identification* (i.e. its ability to be identified as either male or female) as much as its *definition*—biological and cultural—is never revealed. In this way, Segal assumes sex as well as sexuality, without presenting any theories such as those of Monique Wittig for example, that propose sex as being gender from the start. The relationship between sex and gender is an especially confusing one, and although it is easy to expand our views on sex roles, it is much more difficult to conceive of sex, that which

appears to be based in something so seemingly objective as scientific observation, as merely artifice. In his book *Making Sex*, Thomas Lacquere writes: "Two incommensurable sexes *are* the result of discursive practices, but they become possible only within the social realities to which these practices give meaning...in the poetically unpromising domains of histology and physiology, observations were turned into the materials for art—for the artifices of sex—which were then claimed to have a prior natural existence." Difference is another confusing and complex issue and while feminist discourse at one time thrived on difference in search of identity, new feminist discourse is seeking to destroy it on the basis that it only exists in order to discriminate and exploit. Segal basically maintains difference, and because of this many of her proposals for changes in masculinity do not challenge the order of gender and sexuality in any significant way.

Thus, disappointingly, her analysis of symbolism ends, rather than introduce an exploration into how gender and sexuality became institutionalized. Symbolism, she argues, is not the only responsible factor in perpetuating male dominance, since the "possibility of men's sexual coerciveness towards women has been socially tolerated." This is where Segal's text begins to change direction, as she now diverts her attention to economics.

Much of what follows boils down to how oppressive classist and racist conditions provoke men to abuse women (and other men). When it suits her argument, she places emphasis on the significance of lack of economic options for women, which often forces them to remain dependent on relationships with men. While this is true, her economic determinism holds too much weight. There are many women in abusive relations that have economic options, or whose husbands are not poor and/or Black. She accuses theories that look beyond economic roots for explanations of male violence of "nineteenth-century biologism back in the saddle, cloaked in spurious sociological rhetoric." The point of discrediting biologism by feminists was to dismantle essentialist myths of the passive female and the aggressive male, however, the example by Sara Macguire that Segal uses, in my opinion, has nothing to do with biologism: "An analysis of violence against women *based on power structures* explains the potential for all men in emotional/sexual relationships with women to exert control over them using violence..." (my emphasis) At least within this limited context, Macguire is only assuming an understanding of

power structures that goes beyond economics. Because Segal does not, her particular method of stressing the very significant factors of class and race in explaining male violence and domination, merely reveals racial and classist versions of sexism.

Once Segal has placed sexism in its social/economic/political context and demonstrates the various governmental practices which produce conditions that result in sexism, she claims that a 'feminist' State would not, without much of an explanation. Here it is the State that is taken for granted. One could assume that Segal's interpretation of the State is that, currently, it is male, or sexist, and that by changing its agenda it will simply operate differently. More critical analyses of the State would question its structure and function and more specifically the nature of State power as such, claiming that it is inherently violent. "The fact that it is a feminist State in no way changes the fact that it is still hierarchical and authoritarian." (L. Susan Brown, p. 105A) Segal does not even try to justify a feminist State, rather, she presents it as unproblematic and ignores any analysis of it whatsoever, mostly due to her limited analysis of power and its structures in general.

Nonetheless, Segal's book is optimistic. She believes in change and believes in understanding men and most importantly, the differences *between* men in order to overcome the limitations of essentialism. Her optimism is admirable, especially in the face of separatist feminist politics and its variants, which only reinforce gender polarity and often perpetuate 'women's' status as victims, and male privilege. *Slow Motion* is courageous and intelligent in its attempt to destroy many of the myths of male power, while at the same time careful not to ignore some of the harsh realities of male violence and certain power structures that do exist. Segal also stresses social context, both for its strategic implications and also in reaction to extreme individualism, which is too often a means of denying the oppressive nature of institutionalized power and absolving it of any responsibility. In this respect, her work is solid. However, despite presenting several radical points in gender theory—some of which are *not* rooted in economics and transcend the social relations of production and the division between the public and private realms of society—these are not incorporated into her vision of socialist feminism. Consequently, her excellent critique of masculinity—which most importantly reveals its mutability, thereby exposing the tenuousness of many aspects of male power—falls short of reaching to the roots of gender hierarchy, which

many would argue is gender itself; the solutions to which lie primarily in a politics of sex/gender identity, and of the interpretation of the body. Her notion of gender equality is based on the assumption of a true sex, and still maintains sex as a primary organizing principle. Her revised sexual model remains bi-polar; the grey area has merely been expanded.

The economic and political exploitation of gender hierarchy, and its subsequent reinforcement, is conflated with causal factors for the sake of her own argument. Thus the weakness is both analytical, as far as her location of gender is concerned, but also logistical, as she almost 'molds' what gender is, while avoiding fundamental issues concerning the nature of power and the State. In this way, gender is theoretically transformed into a convenient variable which socialist feminism suddenly rescues.

Because many of the components of a radical gender theory and politics of identity are present in her book, the potential is there, but one gets the impression that Segal is not willing to accept the limitations of socialist feminism as an analytical tool for fully explaining gender hierarchy.

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BOOK REVIEW

Paul A. Gilje, *The Road to Mobocracy: Popular Disorder in New York City, 1763-1834*
Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1987

reviewed by George Salzman

"History belongs to the winners" must rankle the ears of most historians as forcefully as Proudhon's even briefer aphorism, "Property is theft," assaults the sensibilities of small-scale merchants and landlords—and for the same reason. Each challenges the legitimacy of a way of livelihood. Each undercuts a self image and a conceptualization of the world in which one at least has a place, if perhaps a not very satisfactory place. Like all aphorisms it is so sweeping a generalization that it can be true in large measure, but not all-encompassing.

And good historians, like good scientists and novelists, seek to not be compassed, but to understand the world as it really is, to uncover and comprehend as many facets of human experience as possible. Of course, when I use the word *really*, I give myself away. Reality exists, and therefore the search for truth is meaningful, and valuable. Paul Gilje's *The Road to Mobocracy* is part of this search. It is a compact, highly focused historical study of the expression of unorganized popular power by mobs in New York City from the 1760s to the 1830s.

Gilje's work is especially timely in these heady days for those of us who believe in the legitimacy of most forms of popular power—including power expressed non-destructively by throngs of everyday people in the streets—as we watch various eastern European governments do the until-now unthinkable yield power peacefully. What a shock it has been to see

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governments yield power not to superior brute force, but to the determined, sustained demands of mobs of hundreds of thousands of ordinary people in the streets simply insisting that their government surrender power! What an unexpected pleasure it is to be reminded that Frederick Douglass's famous dictum to the effect that Power yields nothing without a struggle, that it never has and it never will, does not require that the struggle be violent.

I shall use the terms mob and mobocracy in the same broader sense employed by Gilje, that is without any implication of violence being a necessary part of mob behaviour. This accords with the standard dictionary definition, although current usage seems generally narrower, the term mob connoting not only the populace, the masses, the lower classes of a community, but a rampaging rabble. Gilje's mobs, particularly in the colonial and revolutionary periods, often included members of the elite and the emerging middle classes.

Mobocracy is organized in three parts. In the first Gilje explores the traditions and rituals of Anglo-American mob behaviour, primarily in the half century 1750-1799. The second and third parts of *Mobocracy* offer a generally vivid account of sharpening socio-economic cleavages during the first third of the nineteenth century. His thesis is that during the earlier period, in spite of emerging conflicts of interest, society still clung to the older idea of "corporate" communities, organic units whose inhabitants shared common interests, where a "moral economy" prevailed, and an honest labourer received an honest livelihood. "[T]he city corporation (the term was used purposefully) set the price of bread, regulated the butcher stalls...and guaranteed the supply of firewood. In times of exceptional hardship, the city corporation stepped in to alleviate somewhat the suffering of the poor." (p. 9) In the moral economy, a "baker did not charge whatever price the traffic would bear. Instead, he charged the 'just price'—the price set by tradition and ancient law as being fair and equitable for both himself and his customer." When the baker, enticed by the developing market economy, charged "more than the just price and when the local officials were unwilling or unable to stop him, very often the townspeople rioted, seized the disputed bread, and either sold it for the baker at or a little below the just price or simply walked off with it." (p. 10) However, "by the middle of the eighteenth century...a new aggressive individualism emerged to compete with the ideal of communal solidarity. This occurred along with the rise of a market economy, without

which, "there would have been no riots in defense of the moral economy." (p. 11)

Mobocracy's strength lies in its wealth of assembled factual material. Not so strong are Gilje's interpretations of facts, which are sometimes unconvincing. For example, when discussing the intensifying clash between patrician and plebian interests in the pre-revolutionary period, he notes increasing distinctions of wealth, ethnicity and religion, and increasing emphasis on individual gain; yet he continues that, "the ideal of the single-interest community remained viable; and the elite, unable to explain the changing world around it and unwilling to embrace fully a new ethos of individualism, contemptuously dismissed any disturbance that divided the community as the work of the rabble." (p. 34)

A more credible interpretation, I believe, is that the elite understood they were beneficiaries of the existing social structure, knew very well the ideal of the single-interest community helped maintain the *status quo*, and attributed their recognizably privileged lives to their own superior qualities. It is more likely that the literate elite, owners of newspapers, the "opinion makers", strove to make people believe the myth of communality. Their desire to maintain the myth, and the social inequalities it papered over, was motivation enough to cause their contemptuous dismissal of divisive disturbances as "the work of the rabble." Ideology, to "survive", must be actively propagated by some group within the society. In my own experience, elites are never lacking a rationalization, "unable to explain the ...world." They routinely try to delegitimize actions against their dominance by attributing them to outsiders, agitators, malcontents, anarchists, rabble, communists, trouble makers and the rest of that long and pejoratively-used list so useful to those in power.

Elsewhere Gilje writes, "The key to understanding the increased hostility to mob action in the beginning of the nineteenth century is in the antimob rhetoric developed by all political groups" (p. 118), an assertion which, it seems to me, has little justification. In fact, the thrust of his generally excellent study is that the underlying factor was economic—the development of the market economy—which led to an increasingly marked division between elite and plebian. The development of antimob rhetoric is not "the key to understanding." Rather, it was part of the strategy the elite used to try to maintain its political and economic control. However, occasional lapses are of small overall significance when viewed in light of the searching nature of Gilje's work. He is tentative, exploratory,

conjectural in seeking the motivations for individual's actions, never arrogantly "laying out *the* historical truth." It is only that sometimes his searching is not incisive enough, but towards whom can such criticism not be levelled?

The first part of Gilje's study concludes with an account of "four great riots" in the closing years of the eighteenth century: the Doctors' Riot of 1788, an anti-speculator riot in 1792, and bawdyhouse riots of 1793 and 1799. Describing the Doctors' Riot, he writes,

The New York medical profession had long violated the moral sense of the community by indiscriminate grave robbing to gain corpses for dissection. On April 13, a small boy thought he recognized his mother's body among the medical school's cadavers. The boy told his father, a mason working nearby, who then led his fellow labourers and a gathering crowd in an attack on the hospital...[T]he mob removed bodies and gave them a respectable burial...maintain[ing] a sense of purpose and limit[ing] their violence against both persons and property. (pp. 79-80)

After surrendering its captive medical students, whom city magistrates jailed and promised to prosecute, the mob dispersed. The next morning it reformed and, with the acquiescence of city authorities, re-examined the medical school and "toured the city to search the houses of physicians for stolen bodies." (pp. 80-81) Again that afternoon the mob formed, went to the jail, and demanded the medical students be surrendered. A confrontation ensued, militia were called, and in a running battle three of the rioters were killed. "In both England and America casualties were ordinarily caused by the military, not the rioters, as in the Boston Massacre." (p. 81) By the end of the eighteenth century, riots "might still occasionally be tolerated as long as they were not too violent and were on behalf of the whole community; but...the threshold of toleration had been lowered." (p. 92)

Moving to the detail of the remainder of the book: after a weak beginning chapter on political popular disturbances, two fiery chapters—one on ethnic conflict and one on racial rioting—seized my attention. We have described for us the anti-Catholic, anti-Irish, and anti-black violence and counterviolence squarely in the context of the daily struggle for economic survival. Frighteningly, it reads as an apocalyptic script for the emergence of hate groups in the decaying U.S. economy today, not to speak of grow-

ing ethnic violence and hatreds in eastern Europe and parts of the USSR. This is powerful stuff.

Regarding a ferocious riot on Christmas day, 1806, Gilje notes that,

The Irish rioters were generally poor...The native-born Americans...lived nearby and came from almost the same socioeconomic status as the Irish...one suspects that their trades were under challenge from Irish immigrant competitors. (p. 133)

And later,

The presence of immigrant groups, especially the Irish, made the plight of the black community even more difficult...Both groups competed for the same less-skilled jobs. (p. 160)

...the young, poor rioter who disturbed an African church might have been jealous of the modest property and social standing of some of the black congregation while also envying the sense of identity the black community attained through religious services. (p. 156)

These churches fostered a sense of community among blacks, helped to establish a black leadership, cared for the poor, and created a forum for the antislavery struggle. *No wonder, then, that mobs in July 1834 attacked black churches.* (p. 154)¹

No wonder! One could, with equal logic, note the initially successful efforts of the Black Panthers along similar lines in the 1960s and 1970s, and conclude: "No wonder, then that the FBI infiltrated, sabotaged, and murdered the leadership of the Panthers. Otherwise an economic downturn might have triggered anti-black riots by poor whites." No wonder, perhaps, but more thorough discussion would seem to be in order if we are to understand the sources of such economically enforced suffering and deprivation, and of the

1 My emphasis [G.S.].

reigning ideology which, in concert with the misery of poor people, spawns, I believe, the brutal expression of such virulent hatreds.

An aspect of *Mobocracy* that strongly appeals to me is Gilje's readiness to raise questions to which he—and all of us—can respond only conjecturally. It is a stand without hubris. He'd rather raise the "right" questions even if he cannot answer them authoritatively, than avoid them. For example, in studying the class composition of street disorders, he found that butchers, who often owned several thousand dollars worth of property even in the early 1800s, were frequently the most noticeable group:

The exact reason for the involvement of butchers in these disturbances remains obscure. The early nineteenth-century transition from a municipally regulated trade to a...much more competi[tive]...business might have created...anxiety among butchers...[but] the general affluence of butchers belies such a socioeconomic interpretation. Perhaps more germane is the nature of the butchery trade...Butchering seems to have recruited individuals who had a particular bent toward violence. Moreover, the constant slaughtering of animals toughened individuals in body and mind...In any case...a culture of violence emerged among butchers living in and around the Bowery, which was passed on from one generation to another...(p. 244)

Thus the author offers his conjectures, but prefaces them with the acknowledgment that the exact reason remains obscure.

The concept of "individuals who [have] a particular bent toward violence," which Gilje uses without qualification, suggests it is his belief that this impulse springs from the genetic makeup of those individuals, i.e. that he accepts the ideology of sociobiology. This is of course a key issue for all utopians: where to situate the origin of social violence, with the hope of being able eventually to change the formative conditions that make some individuals capable of violent acts against others. Though his conjectures are arguable, they point towards the most profound social problems. Is it true that the act of killing another sentient being, human or nonhuman, who clearly suffers and is terrorized, brutalizes the killer? I believe that under many circumstances the answer is, yes.

In the final third of the book the growing conflicts are cast in the framework of divergent class interests. Unskilled workers—day labourers,

riggers, stevedores, sailors—came, by the mid-1820s, to recognize this class cleavage, and abandoning "the more traditional tactics of limited collective action...started to depend upon greater violence to back their demands." (p. 185) By contrast, journeymen cordwainers (shoemakers) could turnout (strike) without fear of master shoemakers hiring replacements; they could exert economic pressure without using violence. In an 1809 strike, "to combat the strong bargaining position of the journeymen, the masters had to resort to a legal system sympathetic to their cause; based on the idea that strikes restrained trade, the court of general sessions convicted twenty-five members of the Society of Journeyman Cordwainers of conspiracy." (p. 192) A conspiracy to secure a decent living. Thus the emerging middle classes came into conflict with the plebian classes, and generally supported, and were supported by the governing elites.

As the sanctity of private property, and private profit grew, mob actions were suppressed and punished more forcefully than in earlier decades. Professionalization of the New York City police was part of the response by the middle and upper classes to the threat they felt from mob actions. Gilje's vision of New York is accurate, readable, and, despite his dispassionate style—needed for his acceptance as an "objective" academic historian—is forcefully, even dramatically presented. New York evolved into a turbulent cauldron of rich and poor, of privilege in the midst of much misery, with an every-growing police force—the front line of the system of "law and justice"—trying, with its heavy hand, to hold the lid down.

A brief afterword, titled after Stoddard's 1887 book, *The Volcano Under the City*, begins with a quote from Stoddard,

They carry guns, pistols, axes, hatchets, crowbars, pitch-forks, knives, bludgeons,—the Red Flag. Much of their shouting is done in other tongues, but the cry is in English: 'Down with the rich men! Down with property! Down with the police!' It is an insurrection of evil against law; an uprising of suppressed hellish forces against order. (p. 283)

Stoddard referred to the New York City Draft Riots of 1863, "the most violent and devastating of all American popular disturbances," in which, "at least one thousand persons lost their lives...On the second day of rioting, raging crowds began to attack blacks...and strung up captured blacks from trees and lampposts, setting fire to their bodies." (p. 285)

In today's world, where in many arenas popular needs and aspirations are thwarted by centralized institutions of power, primarily governments, popularly-based groups are emerging with demands for changes of many kinds. Frequently the demands are pressed by street demonstrations. Whenever a large group assembles for a mass demonstration its behaviour may range from that of a highly-disciplined crowd to that of an "unruly" or even riotous mob. Although the mobs on which Gilje's study focuses were minuscule by today's standards, so were the forces of "law and order" which, as today, sometimes tolerated or even condoned, and other times thwarted the crowd's actions.

The same tension existed then as now between the "responsible" members of society—the propertied and privileged—and those without ready access to the channels of institutionalized power. Basically it is this tension, and the unmet needs of the latter group, which drives poor people to confront established power with popular power.

Gilje's writing, fluid, unlaboured, and of slightly poetic cast, is a pleasure to read. And he appears, to one who is but a layperson in history, to have satisfied the canonical requirements of academic scholarship by thorough, painstaking study of original sources, to which his bibliography and extension footnotes direct the scholarly reader.

The driving forces—poverty, misery, injustice—that fuelled mob violence in New York are widespread in the world today. Gilje's study deserves to be read, and pondered. It tells us, without a doubt, that we need to understand hate, and under what conditions it can become virulent enough to unleash incredible brutality.²

² I am indebted to Gene Sharp, author of *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, for a helpful conversation.

BOOK REVIEW

Alvin W. Gouldner, *Against Fragmentation: The Origins of Marxism and the Sociology of Intellectuals*
Oxford University Press, 1985.

reviewed by Graham Baugh

Marxists have often tried to discredit their intellectual opponents by accusing them of articulating the interests of a particular class under the guise of rational political argument. Liberalism is said to be the transparent rationalization of capitalist democracy. Anarchism is the doctrine of the petite bourgeoisie fighting a losing battle against industrial development, or the chiliastic ravings of an illiterate peasantry in need of a new religion.

Yet Marxists have been reluctant to apply such a "class" analysis to their own doctrine, treating it as the revealed revolutionary truth rather than as the ideological expression of class interest. Marxism, as it were, is above ideology. Unlike all other political doctrines, Marxism is not only the alleged expression of the interests of a particular class, the proletariat, it is also the only doctrine which provides an analysis of society which is theoretically correct.

Perhaps Marxists will respond that it is precisely because of the proletariat's class position that it is able to develop a truly "scientific" socialism. The problem with this response is that marxism was created and developed not by workers but by bourgeois intellectuals, the first and foremost being Marx and Engels themselves. Some Marxists, Lenin in particular, expressly denied that the workers were capable of developing anything more than a "trade union" consciousness by themselves. Marxists are therefore confronted with the problem of explaining how

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Marxism, the alleged ideology of the proletariat, was developed by non-proletarians whose class interests presumably lay elsewhere.

It is this salient contradiction which provides a starting point for the late Alvin Gouldner's analysis of the historical origins of Marxism and the sociology of intellectuals. In a way, Gouldner is presenting a Marxist critique of Marxism. More ambitiously, Gouldner tries to sketch out a role for critical theorists today and to salvage certain elements of the Marxist project, but this aspect of his book is the least developed. This is understandable, as the book was published posthumously from his notes, although it was substantially completed before his death.

The essence of Gouldner's argument is that Marxism can only be understood as the ideology of a new class of intellectuals. This is not a new idea. As Gouldner himself admits, it was originally developed by Marx's anarchist opponent, Bakunin, a fact seldom recognized in contemporary discussions of the "new class" theory. In contrast, Gouldner spends considerable time discussing Bakunin's critique of Marxism, being one of those rare academics who actually takes Bakunin seriously as a political thinker.

Gouldner explains the rise of the new class by reference to two essential factors: the "culture of critical discourse" and career blockage. The rational discourse on which intellectuals pride themselves requires that nothing be taken for granted. All claims require a rational justification. Appeals to authority and to tradition are considered irrational. The natural tendency of intellectuals is, therefore, to conceive of ways in which to transform society into a rational form of organization.

This tendency is given an impetus by the subordinate status of intellectuals in developing industrial societies. While some intellectuals are able to fashion lucrative careers for themselves as the loyal servants of the powerful and the privileged, others find their career opportunities limited and resent their subordinate status. Thus, career blockage, fuelled by resentment and alienation, causes intellectuals to seek to transform society so that they may transcend their subordinate status by becoming the new leaders of a rational society.

Gouldner applies this model in his analysis of the historical origins and development of Marxism. He is particularly effective in dealing with the tension in Marxism between the importance of theory and the alleged self-emancipation of the proletariat. The proletariat is conceived as the agent of a historical process ultimately resulting in the creation of a

socialist society. In reality, the proletariat is the agent not of history but of the Marxist intellectuals.

As Gouldner points out, Marxists were not the first intellectuals to look for an appropriate agent for social transformation. Plato looked to the philosopher king, Machiavelli to the prince, and even before Marx other socialists were looking to the working class. This "shopping for an agent" is still seen when intellectuals look for substitutes for a pacified proletariat in other social groups, such as women, students or intellectuals themselves (an illusion to which Gouldner himself seems to have fallen prey).

Radical intellectuals face two problems in mobilizing forces for social change. First, intellectuals themselves have a tendency to be preoccupied with theoretical matters at the expense of practical action. Second, they must enlist the aid of their chosen agents of social change. Lenin resolved these problems with the disciplined party organization which would control and channel the activities of the intellectuals and, at the same time, act as the vanguard of the proletariat. This, Gouldner emphasizes, was not a departure from Marx, who throughout his career utilized various forms of organization to ensure his dominance and to provide leadership for the proletariat, including the removal of his political opponents from these organizations. Marx shared with the Leninists a contempt for self-educated workers, such as Proudhon and Weitling, and an intolerance for any views other than his own. What distinguished Lenin from Marx was the former's frank acknowledgement of the leading role of Marxist intellectuals and their party organization, hidden by Marx in the rhetoric of the self-emancipation of the working class.

Not that Marx was entirely successful, even in his own day, as we see in his conflict with Bakunin. Gouldner's discussion of the conflict between Marx and Bakunin is generally quite good, although he really does not add anything new to what John Clark has written. However, some of his comments are debatable, especially those regarding the relationship between "Bakuninism" and what Gouldner calls "Critical Marxism." It is here that Gouldner's careful sociological analysis really breaks down.

By "Critical Marxism," Gouldner means not only the Western Marxism of such groups as the Frankfurt School, but also Castroism, Maoism and even Leninism. By making this category so broad, Gouldner has deprived it of any real significance. There are more differences than similarities between the Marxism of the Frankfurt School and that of Marxist-Leninist revolutionaries. Gouldner then goes on to draw the connections between

this "Critical Marxism" and "Bakuninism," downplaying the important differences between them. He makes no attempt to establish any historical connection between the two. It is almost as if Bakuninism was a kind of anarchist anthrax lying dormant in the soil only to later infect unsuspecting Marxists in the appropriate circumstances.

What Bakunin shared with the Frankfurt School was an analysis and critique of domination and bureaucracy which went beyond Marx's more narrow analysis of capitalist exploitation. What Bakunin shared with the Marxist-Leninists was an appreciation of the revolutionary potential of the peasantry and a certain vanguardism. However, Bakunin's vanguardism was not as clearly worked out as that of the Marxist-Leninists and in fact was designed to avoid the sort of party dictatorship which the Leninists advocated and practised. Admittedly, their vanguardism sprang from the same source. Both Bakunin and the Leninists were radical intellectuals who did not believe that the masses would necessarily bring about a social revolution on their own. Self-conscious revolutionaries were seen as necessary to spur the masses on, and to ensure the success and consolidation of the revolution.

Where Bakunin differed most importantly from Marx and the Leninists was in his conception of the revolutionary struggle. Bakunin argued that "only liberty can create liberty." Gouldner himself observes that, unlike Marx, Bakunin's politics were "prefigurative." Revolutionary organization and practice were not merely means to an end, but the embodiment, albeit imperfect and incomplete, of those revolutionary ideals which would only be fully realized after the destruction of existing authoritarian practices and institutions. The revolutionary organizations of the workers, Bakunin wrote, "bear in themselves the living seeds of the new society which is to replace the old world. They are creating not only the ideas, but also the facts of the future itself."

In contrast, Marx and the Leninists held an instrumental view of politics. The task of self-conscious revolutionaries was to create a disciplined political organization which would use the coercive power of the State to crush the counter-revolution and to create a socialist society. Libertarian forms of social organization would be the ultimate result of the political struggle but could not be used effectively as part of that struggle. For Marxists, to insist on the consistency of means and ends was to not only conflate the two but to unwittingly ensure that the ends would never be realized. By insisting on federalist and forms of organization, the

Bakuninists would introduce "anarchy" into the workers' ranks and prevent them from defeating their better organized opponents, the capitalists. This point was hammered home by Engels in his notoriously obtuse essay, "On Authority," in which he argued that a "revolution is certainly the most authoritarian thing there is; it is the act whereby one part of the population imposes its will upon the other part by means of rifles, bayonets and cannon—authoritarian means." Lenin and Mao simply put these ideas into practice.

On the other hand, Gouldner might have used his analysis of the new class to explain Bakunin's failure to see the dangers implicit in his own plans for secret societies which were to serve as the "general staff" of the revolution, exercising an "invisible dictatorship" over the masses. The contradictions between Bakunin's conspiratorial vanguardism and his anarchism were noted by many of his opponents, including Marx, and could not have escaped Bakunin's notice. Bakunin responded to his critics by insisting that his secret societies would neither accept nor wield any sort of public power, but would merely act to prevent others from doing so. This is hardly convincing. There is more than a little truth to Gouldner's observation that the "war between Marx and Bakunin was so bitter because it was something of a civil war within the soul of each."

Gouldner himself sees Bakuninism as an ideology of the radical artisans who played a leading role in nineteenth century revolutionary movements, but this fails to account for the intellectuals involved in the anarchist movement, including Bakunin himself. What radical artisans found particularly appealing in Bakunin's ideas, in Gouldner's view, was the critique of the privileged role of intellectuals in techno-bureaucratic society, whether capitalist or socialist, and the demand that the privileges be abolished. It is largely on this basis that Gouldner draws parallels between Bakuninism and Maoism, greatly exaggerating the anti-authoritarianism of the latter.

Although there are some points of agreement between Bakuninism and "Critical Marxism," Gouldner's characterization of Critical Marxism as the successor to Bakuninism is insupportable. He even describes the Communist League's advocacy of permanent revolution in 1850 as the "flood-tide" of Bakuninism in Marxism, although Bakunin had absolutely no influence in that organization (at the time he was literally in chains, having been arrested and imprisoned for his revolutionary activities). He also misinterprets Bakunin's emphasis on destruction as an endorsement

of terrorism, which Bakunin rejected, in contrast to Marx and the Leninists. Not only is this an essentially "idealist" analysis of the evolution of Marxism, it smacks of the by now discredited Marxist notion, popularized by E.J. Hobsbawm, that Bakuninism is a primitive stage in socialist evolution, destined to be supplanted by the "scientific socialism" of the Marxists.

To a large extent, "Bakuninism" itself is a Marxist invention. Bakunin commended his supporters for refusing to be characterized as this mindless followers, and at the October 1876 congress of the anti-authoritarian International, barely three months after Bakunin's death, Malatesta made a point of rejecting the label because, in his words, "we do not share all Bakunin's theoretical and practical ideas, and because above all, we follow ideas and not men, and rebel against this habit of embodying a principle in a man." Bakunin's genuine successors therefore identified themselves as anarchists, and while they accepted much of his critique of Marxism, bureaucracy, domination and the State, the majority of them also rejected his implicitly authoritarian conspiratorialism as inconsistent with anarchist ideals.

It is absurd then for Gouldner to write that "Bakuninism," because it "could feel free to seek power *before* a capitalist economy secured bourgeois hegemony," might more readily than Marxism "achieve a successful political revolution but be unable to pass over to the successful social revolution it sought." Neither Bakunin nor his true successors, the anarchists, sought State power, and in practice they were more successful in achieving a social revolution in Spain during the Civil War than they were in destroying the State, which reemerged under Marxist domination to crush the anarchist social revolution well before Franco emerged victorious.

It is Marxism, not Bakuninism, which has been successful in seizing State power, but seemingly is incapable of effecting a genuine social revolution; and it is when Gouldner begins to account for the political success of Marxism that he unintentionally demonstrates the irrelevance of the so-called "Bakuninism" to that success. Marxism always contained within it certain elements which enabled it to adapt to different revolutionary situations. It did not need to be infected with the Bakuninist virus.

One of Marxism's "greatest sources of political viability and adaptability," as Gouldner says, is its "metaphoricality." The central Marxist metaphor is enslavement, and it is this metaphor which justifies "rebellion against *any* kind of master," by any kind of slave, whether peasant or

proletarian, in virtually any kind of situation. It is simply a matter of adapting the metaphor to prevailing conditions.

Marxism, as a theory, seeks to recover that which is hidden or suppressed, in relation to particular social groups or classes. So, Marxism reveals "property as the foundation of the social order" to intellectuals whose "common ideology had normally stressed the primacy of ideas...but at the same time offers the comforting promise that its days are numbered and calls for its abolition." Marxism also promises the "liberation of the scientific intelligentsia from the ignorant hegemony of owners," and "thus offers a future which is comfortable both to humanistic intellectuals who believe that higher values have been vulgarized by property, and liberating to the technological interests and ambitions of the scientific intelligentsia." Marxism therefore "uniquely provides a grounding for the *unity* of the New Class, which is otherwise divided among older humanistic intellectuals and modern technicians and scientists."

Marxism's obvious appeal to disenchanted and alienated intellectuals, combined with its metaphorical nature, which allows intellectuals to adapt it to virtually any situation (while preserving their privileged role as those uniquely capable of both interpreting and applying Marxist metaphors) helps explain its political success—as well as its excesses and failures. A politics of deferred gratification became a rationalization for State terrorism and mass murder. The role "Bakuninism" was inconsequential, despite recent attempts to portray Bakunin as the true father of Stalinism (*a la* Mendel and Kelly).

In the concluding portion of his book, Gouldner sets forth a number of principles for contemporary critical theorists to follow. Gouldner believes that intellectuals need to communicate and preserve information which is suppressed and threatening to the *status quo*. He also thinks it important that intellectuals recognize the dissonance between power and goodness. Intellectuals have a dual task: rescuing "from neglect underprivileged sources of definitions of social reality," and inhibiting the "crediting of establishment-sponsored definitions of social reality." Intellectuals need to achieve some consensus in their internal relations (to each other) while maintaining distance from society's elites. Gouldner thinks that this can only be accomplished within "a community of theorists committed to the understanding of the social totality." Unfortunately, that is rather undeveloped.

As an analysis of Marxism as the ideology of a new class of intellectuals, Gouldner's book is often brilliant. His analysis of Bakuninism is not as successful. His preliminary sketch of a contemporary program for critical theorists is vague and underdeveloped. His emphasis on a community of intellectuals, and on the distinction between power and goodness, indicates a critical awareness of the dangers of adopting a purely instrumental view of reason. However, neglecting to develop the relationship between a community of critical theorists and society as such, it remains unclear in what manner intellectuals can pursue their own goals and interests without seeking power or privilege for themselves. The role of intellectuals in society will probably remain ambivalent. Gouldner's book can at least alert those intellectuals to some of the dangers to which they may be prone.

BOOK REVIEW

M. C. Howard and J. E. King, *A History of Marxian Economics: Volume I, 1883-1929*
Princeton University Press, 1989

reviewed by Florian Bail

Marxists who had relegated their critics to history now find themselves imprisoned in it, with broken memories and silent regret. Having betrayed themselves and lost their future, their past is as fragmented as their murdered conscience. Nothing could document the moral misery of present Marxism better than the recent outpouring of commentary, sympathetic or critical, on its history. The ground tenor is archaeological, describing a terra cotta army in the sand breaking up into figurines, personalities and personages what not so long ago was the force of history itself. And what could better demonstrate the vacuity of the movement than its failure to apply its theory to itself? Of all the errors of Marxism this one is the most fatal: that it exempted itself from history. As a result the story of its political achievements and thought becomes a disjointed commentary in an exhibition catalogue arranged for convenience as if history had become indifferent now to those who still go by it.

This or similar thoughts must come to even the most sympathetic reader of Howard and King's, *A History of Marxian Economics*. The measured tone and the pedantic sequence of entries alone are testimony that from this past men fail, in the words of Marx, to "conjure up...spirits...to their services and borrow...names, battle cries, and costumes in order to present the new stage of world history in this time-honoured disguise and this borrowed language" (see the *Eighteenth Brumaire*...). Instead, we watch a parade of the dead and wonder whether anybody cares to judge. Howard

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and King do a bit of it, mildly, and academically, refuting errors now and then but no longer arguing. Indeed, their diligent and economic history has neither plot nor line which would assemble a future from lived sacrifice. The style and argument of the book betrays the objective indifference of the history of Marxism to the future of socialism. Even the fleas have left the fur and from the doorway of the law of history comes only a draught - too thin to fill the wings of Benjamin's angel of history.

The book covers the period of Marxist (never mind the bashful "Marxian") economic theory from the death of Marx to the publication of Grossmann's *The Law of Accumulation and the Breakdown of the Capitalist System*. The principal theme of the book: the prediction of the internal collapse of capitalism. A second volume will cover the period from 1929 to today. Conceived and organized as an extended encyclopedia, *A History of Marxian Economics* offers excellent if rather technical and summary chapters on the old censoring and scientizing Engels, discussion of the theory of value, and reviews of Bernstein, Kautsky, Hilferding, Luxemburg, Plekhanov, Tugan-Baranovsky, Lenin, Trotsky, Bucharin, Stalin and Grossman. The display of the statistical material is minimal and always in support of the demonstration of a technical argument. Each theorist is introduced with a separate capsule biography. Although the book develops a coherent argument, each chapter can be read by itself.

The history is framed by a brief exposition of an argument which attempts to overcome the isolation of theory from praxis by closing the pragmatic link between concrete politics and economic reflection. From this argument derives the basic division of the material of the book into a German and a Russian tradition. The German contribution is interpreted as concentrating on the antagonistic structure of modernity while the Russian contribution is interpreted as concentrating on the indecisive imbalance of underdevelopment. In their conclusion the authors offer the broad observation that Marxist orthodoxy had to cope with three complexities: i) the publication of Marx's mature writings on economics, ii) the polycentrism of the theory, and iii) the expanding range of issues subsumed under the theory. The handling of the material is slightly formalistic and rather orthodox, due to the format of the publication. The text is reliable and sufficiently comprehensive. The presentation of each theorem is balanced with a concise critical review. On balance, the book is an excellent companion for quick consultation; but as a history it is a brick.

What is to be criticised? Although written like a dictionary, the book is not entirely successful in this respect. Most entries are so concise and the criterion of selection is so specialized that the reader will often need to consult other sources in order to obtain a more balanced understanding of the theory under review. The argument establishing the thematic link between political praxis and economic theory is not sufficiently developed to show to what extent economic theory either served as an apology for a preconceived political praxis or functioned as an aesthetic sublimation of political routine. Once more, Marxism demonstrates its capacity to confuse itself, it being theoretical opportunism alone which convinces it that its thinking has any roots in reality. Reference to socio-economic development in Germany or Russia is summary and unoriginal, repetitive of now standard prejudices about German and Russian history in the nineteenth century. The argument from circumstance is particularly weak in the coverage of Bolshevik reconstruction of society. The actual debate over war communism, state capitalism, NEP and the accumulation problems after the revolution, for instance, is hardly mentioned; neither are the constitutive divisions amongst the German Social Democrats and the competitive relationship between social democracy and (bourgeois) social reform. While one must discuss the development of Marxist economics immanently—as, for instance, in the case of value theory of the theory of declining profit rates—one must also be aware that what it considers the real economic stimulus or basis structure is a deduction from theory rather than unprejudiced observation.

Historical reconstruction becomes intrinsic to this *History of Marxian Economics*, thematically constitutive of the exposition of the material. However, the aforementioned division into two traditions appears as unconvincing as it is banal. It is curious when arbitrarily-formalized national traditions are seen to determine a theory which strives to predict social change. The local circumstance of writing slips into the mode of thinking, and the overall class character of Marxian economic thinking is obscured as the reader is offered an amusing display of *pensees de circonstance*. This would be a petty point if it wasn't a core problem in Marxist commentary, including the book under review. From the very beginning the dialectical theory of class evolution was based on a hypostasis of circumstance and needed revision upon new circumstantial evidence. That is not only the dramaturgy of the *Eighteenth Brumaire* and the *Class Struggles in France*, but the condition of all Marxist apologetics. Therefore, class becomes a

the Second Cold War, by Fred Halliday and *The Polish Revolution: Solidarity 1980–82*, by Timothy Garton, reviewed by E.P. Thompson.

Volume 18, No. 1. Articles — “The Greens,” by Carl Boggs; “The Anarchist as Elitist,” by William O. Reichert; “The Anarchist Critique of the State and the CNT,” by Gary Prevost; “Ambivalence Towards the State: A comment,” by Juan Gómez Casas. **Book Reviews** — *The Olive Field*, by Ralph Bates, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, by Ernest Hemingway, *Man’s Hope*, by André Malraux, *Homage to Catalonia*, by George Orwell, *Seven Red Days*, by Ramón Sender, *Birth of Our Power*, by Victor Serge, all reviewed by George Woodcock; *The Power of the Powerless*, by Vaclav Havel, reviewed by Zdena Tomin.

Volume 18, No. 2. Articles — “Thinking Ecologically: A Dialectical Approach,” by Murray Bookchin; “The Scandals of 1986,” by Noam Chomsky; “North American Free Trade: The Last Debate,” by Gary Teeple. **Book Reviews** — *Anarchism: A Theoretical Analysis*, by Alan Ritter, reviewed by Frank Harrison; *News From Somewhere: Connecting Health and Freedom in the Workplace*, by Gary A. Lewis, reviewed by George Woodcock; *Haymarket Scrapbook*, edited by Dave Roediger and Franklin Rosemont, reviewed by George Woodcock; *The Evolution of Cooperation*, by Robert Axelrod, reviewed by C. George Benello.

Volume 19, No. 1. Articles — “Gorbachev and Glasnost,” by Frank Harrison; “The Source of the Nile: A Search for the Origins of Male Domination,” by Rossella Di Leo; “Terrains of Protest: Striking City Women,” by Martha A. Ackelsberg and Myrna Margulies Breitbart; “Edward C. Carpenter’s Socialism in Retrospect,” by William O. Reichert. **Book Reviews** — *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and the Rise of French Republican Socialism*, by K. Steven Vincent, reviewed by Alan Ritter; *The Problem of Political Obligation: A Critique of Liberal Theory*, by Carole Pateman, reviewed by Graham Baugh; *Homage to Spanish Exiles: Voices from the Spanish Civil War*, by Nancy Macdonald, reviewed by George Woodcock; *Montreal After Drapeau*, by Jean-François Léonard and Jacques Lèveillé, reviewed by Henri Lustiger-Thaler.

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Book Reviews — *State Theories: From Liberalism to the Challenge of Feminism*, by Murray Knuttila, reviewed by William R. McKercher and Frank Harrison; *Nonviolent Revolution in India*, by Geoffrey Ostergaard, reviewed by Robert Graham.

Volume 20, No. 1. Articles — “Unhinging All Governments: The Defects of Political Representation,” by Thomas S. Martin; “Toward a New Politics: Principles and Programme of the Vermont and New Hampshire Greens”; “Elisée Reclus: Between Religion and Science,” by Marie Fleming; “Rights and Reality,” by Karl Hess. **Book Reviews** — *Truth or Dare: Encounters with Power, Authority and Mystery*, by Starhawk, reviewed by Janet Biehl; *Our Common Future: The Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development*, reviewed by John Bacher; *Understanding Technological Change*, by Chris DeBresson, reviewed by Art Davis and Bruce Allen; *The Decline of Organized Labor in the United States*, by Michael Goldstein; *Workers’ Struggles, Past and Present*, edited by James Green; *Critical Studies in Organization and Bureaucracy*, edited by Frank Fischer and Carmen Sirianni, reviewed by Mark Leier.

Volume 20, No. 2. Articles — “Kropotkin’s *The Great French Revolution*,” by George Woodcock; “Neo-Conservatism and Social Ecology: 1960s–1980s,” by Raymond B. Wrabley; “East Germany: ‘The Times They Are A-Changing’,” by Bruce Allen; “Science and Anarchism: From Bakunin to Bookchin,” by Frank Harrison; “Anarchism,” by Peter Kropotkin. **Book Reviews** — *Félix Fénéon*, by Joan Ungersma Halperin, reviewed by George Woodcock; *Bakunin and the Italians*, by T.R. Ravindranathan, reviewed by Frank Harrison.

Volume 21, No. 1. Articles — “Beijing Spring 1989: The People’s Democracy Movement,” documents from participants at Tiananmen Square; “The Sans-Culottes and the Enragés: Libertarian Movements Within the French Revolution,” by Brian Morris; “Poland’s New Generation of Oppositionists,” by Bruce Allen; “The Crisis of Soviet Statism,” by Frank Harrison; “Beyond Feminism: Anarchism and Human Freedom,” by L. Susan Brown. **Book Reviews** — *Partners in Enterprise: The Worker Ownership Phenomenon*, edited by Jack Quarter and George Melnyk, and *Unions in Politics*, by Gary Marks, both reviewed by Mark Leier.

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Volume 22, Nos. 1 & 2. Articles — "Noam Chomsky's Anarchism", by Paul Marshall; Interviews on "The New World Order" and the origins of his scepticism with Noam Chomsky; "Socialism and Ecology," by James O'Connor; "The Meaning of Confederalism," by Murray Bookchin; "Anarchy, Organization, and Scale," by Frank Harrison; "Democracy, Heretical and Radical," by George Woodcock. *Book Reviews* — *Language and Politics*, by Noam Chomsky, edited by C.P. Otero, reviewed by Shaun Harbord; *Green Cities: Ecologically Sound Approaches to Urban Space*, edited by David Gordon, reviewed by Mark Luccarelli; *Montréal: A Citizen's Guide to Politics*, edited by Jean-Hugues Roy and Brendan Weston, reviewed by Henri Lustiger-Thaler; *Welfare and Worker Participation: Eight Case Studies*, by Patrick Kerans, Glenn Drover, and David Williams, reviewed by Carl Hodge.

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A Capital Scandal, by Robert Fife and John Warren, Key Porter Books Ltd., 1991

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