Robert Graham, Various Authors
The Emergence of the New Anarchism
1940–1970 (republished 2014)

Robert Graham's Anarchism Weblog, accessed June 25, 2014 at
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thoroughly compatible with the historical needs of our time, and it might run through the channels of our decaying civilisation as the forces of early Christianity burst out from the catacombs into the similarly moribund structure of imperial Rome. More than ever before, such a movement could change the whole character of human social existence.

– George Woodcock
Resistance, Vol. XII, No. 2, June 1954

agree with Macdonald that a third front of the people against all the militarists is out of the realm of historical possibility. To later observers it is only the movements which have succeeded that seem to have been historically possible, but it must be remembered that even these movements, in their very beginnings, must have seemed Quixotic hopes to the majority of the people who saw them. Up to 1917, the Bolsheviks were a tiny minority group of exiled plotters and underground labour agitators, and their ascension to power within a few months must have seemed extremely unlikely. The Congress movement of Gandhi started out of minute beginnings, and nothing could have been more pitifully inauspicious than the group of seven fanatics who gathered to form the Nationalist Socialist Party in the dim beginnings of Hitler's rise to power. What negative movements like Communism and Nazism have achieved from infinitesimal beginnings is surely not beyond the power of positive movements. And therefore I still maintain that a movement of the people that will carry through a formidable resistance to the threat of war, that will percolate through the weak points of the iron curtain–East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia–will only become impossible if there are no men to take the initiative, if there are no men with the imagination to conceive the right way to strike the thoughts and hearts of the world. There are those pessimists who contend that such a hope is Quixotic and that the day of movements of enthusiasm and faith is past. I would claim that in such times of crisis as our own we learn that the uncompromising rejection of negative forces–which our critics call Quixoticism–is in fact the only realistic hope of saving ourselves and our culture. And I would also suggest that there are plenty of signs to show that a time of this kind provides the very conditions in which a movement of faith and enthusiasm can take root. Already there are some such movements which have had an amazing amount of limited success; Bhave's crusade for voluntary land redistribution in India is one example. A dynamic eleventh-hour anti-militarist movement that struck the imaginations of the world's peoples would be

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a radical modification of Russian policy which only a consciousness of deep-seated discontent could have induced. Added to such facts as these, there is always the process of softening which all empires in history have experienced when they have spread too far. Indeed, it seems probable that it has been less the threat of American guns than the difficulty of assimilating radically different cultures in Eastern Germany and Czechoslovakia that has kept the Russians back in Europe; they probably realise that even many professed Communists in France and Italy would be part of a great movement of non-cooperation if the Russian armies did march further West, a movement so corrupting that the Red soldiers would be no more proof against it than they were against the glamour of a higher standard of living in Germany and Austria in the first months of the occupation of 1944.

One of the reasons why a conscious and closely linked–if not formally organised–libertarian movement should be active against war in all the countries where it can work is the fact that it will be able to provide the nucleus for movements of resistance in the case of the imposition of foreign–or home-grown–totalitarianisms. But I think that it is also just possible that such a movement might play a vital part even in the event of atomic war. Perhaps, when we talk of the entire destruction of civilisation by the Bomb, this is a little on the rhetorical side. Certainly the big centres will go in the event of an atomic war, and most of the population as well, but it is just possible that the rural districts and the small towns will remain, and that a new, decentralised form of society will perforce have to emerge on the ruins of the old. If this should happen, then any man who has chosen a constructive rather than a destructive attitude will find his part to play in preventing the rebuilding of the centralised states which will have brought on their own destruction, and in nurturing the appearance of free and autonomous local societies.

Meanwhile, the war is not yet upon us, and every day that it is delayed should be a day of hope, not a day of despair. For I do not

War I did? Of course not, unless there is a complete reversal of the attitude of the common people on the question of war. And since that reversal must appear somewhere and at some time, if it is to appear at all, there is no reason why we should not seek for it now just as well as after another destructive war.

When Macdonald says that the third alternative in 1939 was "doing nothing", he is really directing a sneer at the protagonists of the policy of war resistance. He believes that non-militaristic resistance will cut no ice with the Communists and that the triumph which Gandhi won over the British in India would have been impossible if he had been faced by the tougher minded Russian Communists. Indeed, it is evident throughout Macdonald's arguments that he has what seems to me an exaggerated idea of the mechanical perfection of the Communist machine. But no society is in fact, as he would contend, "perfectly dead and closed". This is an abstraction, and like all abstractions it is riddled with the interstices of contradiction that are opened by the facts of real life. There are in reality well-established instances in which totalitarian governments retreated before movements of non-violent resistance; the recent strikes in Spain, the strikes in Copenhagen during the Nazi occupation, the demonstrations last summer in Berlin and throughout East Germany–all of these had a profoundly disturbing effect on the regimes against which they were directed, and it was found, in Germany at least, that even the trained policemen of the totalitarian order were far from impervious to the example of the resisting people. Furthermore, recent events in Russia have shown that even in the heartland of the Communist order the rulers have found that there can be a limit, even among workers with no civil rights whatever, to the extent to which sacrifices will be accepted. Beyond that limit there begins to appear at least a Schweikian kind of resistance, and concessions are needed; taken together, the recent concessions of the new Russian rulers–withdrawal from collectivity in agriculture, expansion of the supply of consumer goods, softening of cultural controls, and lessening of MVD powers–represent

In Volume Two of *Anarchism: A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas*, subtitled The Emergence of the New Anarchism (1939–1977), I document the remarkable resurgence of anarchist ideas and action following the tragic defeat of the Spanish anarchists in the Spanish Revolution and Civil War, and the mass carnage of the Second World War. Below, I have collected additional writings from many of the people who were responsible for that resurgence. Herbert Read, Marie Louise Berneri, Paul Goodman, David Wieck, Daniel Guerin, Alex Comfort, George Woodcock and the Noir et Rouge group in France were among those who made anarchism relevant again, despite its critics' attempts to consign it to the dustbin of history.

Volume Two of *Anarchism: A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas* opens with excerpts from Herbert Read's 1940 essay, "The Philosophy of Anarchism." Read had declared himself in favour of anarchism in his 1938 publication, Poetry and Anarchism, with which I closed Volume One of the Anarchism anthology. There he wrote that he sought to "balance anarchism with surrealism, reason with romanticism, the understanding with the imagination, function with freedom." Read was under no illusions regarding how people would react to his endorsement of anarchism. At the time, the world's various anarchist movements were in eclipse, and most radical intellectuals supported the Soviet Union with its Marxist ideology. It was the era of "Popular Fronts" against Fascism, which the Stalinist Communists used to co-opt other forces on the left, resulting in the further isolation of the anarchists, their inveterate foes and frequent victims (see Chapter 18 of Volume One, "The Russian Revolution").

Herbert Read (1893–1968)

Herbert Read (1893–1968) had served in the First World War, which helped turn him into a pacifist. By 1938, he was a noted

poet, essayist and art critic. In the 1930s, he helped introduce Surrealism to an English audience. After the Second World War, he did the same for existentialism, the philosophy that was being popularized in France by people like Jean Paul Sartre and Albert Camus. He was current with the latest intellectual and artistic trends, including Freudian psychoanalysis, which helped to inform his approach to anarchism, art and education. Read was one of a few better known intellectuals at the time who expressed anarchist ideas in a contemporary idiom, helping to pave the way for the remarkable resurgence of anarchism that surprised many, including some anarchists, in the 1960s. Other noteworthy contributors to this anarchist renaissance were Paul Goodman and Dwight Macdonald in the United States, Marie Louise Berneri, Alex Comfort and George Woodcock in England, and Giancarlo de Carlo in Italy. I have included extensive selections from all of these writers in Volume Two of the Anarchism anthology.

Not all anarchists were enamoured with these new currents in anarchist theory. Anarchists who took a "class struggle" approach, which emphasized the revolutionary role of the working class and the need for anarchists to take part in working class struggles, such as the Impulso group in Italy, denounced the "new" anarchism as counter-revolutionary, referring to it as "resistencialism," because writers like Read had purportedly abandoned any hope for a successful social revolution and instead advocated resistance to authority, rather than its abolition (Anarchism, Volume Two, Selection 38).

Read, however, had not abandoned the idea of a social revolution. He simply conceived of it in broader terms, and distinguished it from more conventional conceptions of revolution by reviving Max Stirner's (Volume One, Selection 11) distinction between revolution and insurrection. A revolution is "an exchange of political institutions." An insurrection "aims at getting rid of these political institutions altogether." Consequently, he looked forward to a "spontaneous and universal insurrection" (Volume Two, Selection 1), but

countries have a few years more of comparatively spacious living than their unfortunate fellow men on the other side of the various curtains (though it must not be forgotten that some countries within the western orbit, e.g. Spain and Jugoslavia, are not far behind Russia in the degree of their totalitarianism). "Being on the same road is not the same thing as being there already", Macdonald rightly remarks, and it is also true that "this malign trend [towards totalitarianism] can to some extent be resisted". But, to my mind, it can only be resisted by those who are willing to go the whole hog and point out that all and any states are the seedbeds of tyranny and war. The folly is in those who try to pick and choose, who say, like Macdonald, that they wish to support the Western states but to declare objection to certain aspects, e.g. "the Smith and McCarran Acts, French policy in Indo-China, etc." In fact, as events have shown in the last few months, all these things are integral aspects of American policy which cannot be divided from the whole. They are part of the intolerance and aggressiveness which any expansive state has to maintain in order to keep its initiative.

But, the situation being as it is, what is to be done? Macdonald, it is evident, is extremely uneasy in his new found situation of an unwilling supporter of war against Russia as an eventual possibility, and he admits that it provides no complete solution for the dilemma. But has he in fact examined all other alternatives? There is one significant passage at the end of his Appendices to The Root is Man. He says: "The only historically real alternatives in 1939 were to back Hitler's armies, to back the Allies' armies, or to do nothing. But none of these alternatives promised any great benefit for mankind, and the one that finally triumphed has led simply to the replacing of the Nazi by the Communist threat, with the whole ghastly newsreel flickering through once more in a second showing." And if the Communist threat followed the defeat of the Nazi threat, what, one might ask, is likely to follow the defeat of the Communist threat? Is World War III any more likely to produce a peaceful and civilised world than World War II and World

believe. On the other hand, I think I speak for many anarchists when I say that they do not allow a belief in the aggressive militarism of Russia to convince them that it is any greater a threat to world peace than the United States. Recent months have undoubtedly shown an increase in American sabre-rattling which has aroused misgiving, not only among war-resisters, but also among British Conservatives and their French equivalents. It is just as possible that war may come through the blundering blusters of Dulles as through the machinations of Malenkov; in this particular moment, it seems certain that, for purely practical reasons, Russia is even less anxious than the United States for a war, but the great danger remains the unplanned one–that the perilous game of bluff and counter-bluff will actually one day spark off a genuine war.

And that war may mean the end of most that we treasure in Western culture–and of much of the good that remains in Russia as well. Macdonald sees the present situation as a "fight to the death between radically different cultures". I personally do not think the contests of states and politicians can have anything to do with cultures (except, of course, to harm or destroy them). Culture is a product of the talents and thoughts and spiritual impulses of individuals and peoples, it thrives on peace, and lives by other means than the political. Certainly the next war will destroy a vast part of the material capital of twenty-five centuries of world culture; what is worse, it will probably encourage the spread of circumstances that will inhibit renewal. Already, the very shadow of the Bomb seems to be causing a drying up of the spontaneity of art that is being felt all over the world; in England and France alike, for the first time since the middle of the last century, there are no real avant gardes in literature and the arts, and all over the world we are dismally lacking in those achievements of renaissance which followed the peace of 1918.

Macdonald seems to find some comfort in the fact that things in the United States are not so bad as in Russia. He is not wholly unjustified. At the very least it means that individuals living in Western

discarded "the romantic conception of anarchism–conspiracy, assassination, citizen armies, the barricades. All that kind of futile agitation has long been obsolete: but it was finally blown into oblivion by the atomic bomb." Today, "action must be piecemeal, nonviolent, insidious and universally pervasive" (Volume Two, Selection 36).

Defining the measure of progress as "the degree of differentiation in society" (Volume Two, Selection 1), Read sought to create an organic society in which everyone is free to develop and express their unique talents and abilities, bringing forth "the artist latent within each one of us" (Volume Two, Selection 19). Arguing that "real politics are local politics," Read proposed a system of direct democracy based on functional and communal groups federated with each other, with their activities being coordinated by ad hoc delegates who are never separated from their "natural productive" functions (Volume One, Selection 130).

When Murray Bookchin started drawing the connections between anarchism and ecology in the 1960s, he cited Read as one of his inspirations (Volume Two, Selection 48). Read's emphasis on local politics can also be found in Bookchin's writings, in his concept of "libertarian municipalism." Bookchin's distinction between a libertarian politics of directly democratic community assemblies and the bureaucratic authoritarianism of the state can therefore be found in Read's earlier writings.

In the following excerpts from Read's 1947 BBC lecture, "Neither Liberalism Nor Communism," he further develops his conception of anarchism as an alternative kind of politics without the state, emphasizing, as Bookchin did later, the insight of the ancient Greek philosophers that a truly democratic politics requires decentralization and human-scale.

Neither Liberalism Nor Communism (1947)

It has always been recognized since the time of the Greek philosophers that the practicability of a free democracy was somehow bound up with the question of size–that democracy would only work within some restricted unit such as the city-state. This was the conclusion of Plato and Aristotle in the ancient world, and their view has been supported in modern times by great political philosophers like Rousseau, Proudhon, Burckhardt and Kropotkin.

Based on this realization, a political philosophy has arisen which opposes the whole conception of the State. This theory, which would abolish the State, or reduce it to insignificance, is sometimes known as distributivism, sometimes as syndicalism, sometimes as guild socialism, but in its purest and most intransigent form it is called anarchism. Anarchism, as the Greek roots of the word indicate, is a political philosophy based on the idea that a social order is possible without rule, without dictation–even the dictation of a majority. Senor de Madariaga in his broadcast used the word as an antithesis to order, which is a common misuse of the word. Anarchism, indeed, seeks a very positive form of social order, but it is order reached by mutual agreement, not order imposed by unilateral dictation.

Though anarchism as a political doctrine has a respectable ancestry and has numbered great poets and philosophers like Godwin and Shelley, Tolstoy and Kropotkin among its adherents: though even now it is the professed faith of millions of people in Spain, in Italy and, alas, in Siberia: though it is the unformulated faith of millions more throughout the world–though, that is to say, it is one of the fundamental political doctrines of all time, it has never been given a place in our insular discussions of the political problems of our time.

Why this conspiracy of silence? I shall not spend any time on that interesting speculation, but I shall try, in the few minutes left to me, to give you the main principles of this distinct political theory

oppose him do so because they consider him too inefficient and too tactless in his job. Behind the lurid facade of the Congressional committees the work of suppressing the minority opinion goes on quite happily in the hands of the administration; even the Army uses its present bout of shadow boxing with McCarthy as a front to cover a thorough-going plan of discriminating, not only against known Communists, but also against those within its ranks who are merely suspected of left-wing sympathies. Readers of Hannah Arendt's book, The Origins of Totalitarianism, which has done so much to mould Dwight Macdonald's recent thought, will remember that she pointed out that one of the most salient characteristics of a totalitarian regime was the creation of a perpetual and persecuted minority. Recent American government proposals to turn Communists or suspected Communists into second-class Americans by depriving them of citizenship are a significant step towards the same process of creating a scapegoat minority, a minority of opinion rather than race. Macdonald asserts that in the United States, the reaction is carried on "furtively and apologetically"; in recent months it has not been McCarthy or any of the protagonists of repressive legislation that has been "furtive or apologetic", but rather those so-called liberals who could only muster one vote in the Senate against giving McCarthy the funds to carry on his work of witch-hunting. Here is a situation of liberal spinelessness before reactionary aggressiveness which reminds one forcibly of the situation in Italy before the March on Rome and in the Weimar Republic in the days of Hitler's rise to power during the 1930s. It also reminds one of Trotsky in Russia creating the means of his own destruction by conniving at the persecution of other minorities in the days before his fall from power.

To return to Macdonald's arguments, he accuses the war-resisters of believing that "the world's most chauvinist and militaristic government [the Russian] is… striving for world peace against the evil machinations of the State Department and the British Foreign Office". This, again, the anarchists definitely do not

or East Germany. And I would agree with Dwight Macdonald that, again at this moment, Soviet communism is "far more inhumane and barbarous as a social system than our own."

But to agree to these points is not to agree that the political aims of the rulers of the Western states are good, or that the superiority of Western culture is a logical excuse for war, or that this superiority will necessarily last forever–that it will last, for instance, more than a few weeks in the event of an atomic war.

It seems to me, indeed, that far from maintaining those qualities in which Western countries are more advanced than Russia, the kind of war that is likely to ensue under the pretence of defending democracy will be the surest way of all, not of reducing or counter-acting inhumanity and barbarity, but of universalising them. Atomic war, I maintain, is a more certain way of bringing about the collapse of what we regard as civilised values than any amount of Soviet aggression. And for this reason I consider any state that includes in its political and military manoeuvres the threat of atomic war to be as much an "enemy" of mankind in general as any other similar state.

Even without an atomic war, the gulf between American and Russian political life seems to contract with the years. In a little prophetic fantasy which he wrote for the New York Times, Bertrand Russell envisaged a future in which the atomic war would be averted because Senator McCarthy would have become President of the United States and would have discovered so little real difference between the outlook of his administration and that of Comrade Malenkov that agreement on spheres of influence would become easy. This may sound far-fetched in fact, but I think that in spirit it is not so, since McCarthy's activities have been consistently directed towards preparing in America a totalitarian atmosphere which a Communist ruler would find congenial.

But I do not think that McCarthy himself is the only sinister portent in the United States today. He is only an extreme example of a general trend among the ruling elite, and even the Republicans who

Believing that an expanding democracy leads to the delegation of authority to the creation of a governing class of politicians and bureaucrats–believing, in Acton's words, that democracy tends to unity of power, and inevitably to the abuse of power by power-corrupted politicians, we who are anarchists seek to divide power, to decentralize government down to the localities in which it is exercised, so that every man has a sense of social responsibility and participates immediately in the conduct of his social order.

That is the political aspect of the theory. But it is equally in the economic field that democracy tends to unity of power–either the power of the capitalist monopoly or the power of the nationalized industry. We believe in the decentralization of industry and in the deproletarization of labour in the radical transformation and fragmentation of industry, so that in place of a few powerful trade combines and trade unions, we should have many small co-operative farms and workshops, administered directly by the workers themselves.

We believe, that is to say, in a federal or co-operative commonwealth, and we believe that this represents an ideal which is distinct from any offered by liberalism or communism. You may be inclined to dismiss it as an impracticable ideal, but within limits we can prove that it does work, in spite of unfavourable economic conditions and in the face of ruthless opposition from capitalists or communists. There have been many failures and many false starts, but these have been studied by the sociologists of the movement, and we know pretty accurately why certain co-operative communities have failed. We think we know for what reasons others have survived for a century or more–the Hutterites, a religious community was founded in Moravia in the 16th century and has carried out these principles successfully ever since. More remarkable, because operating within the economic structure of a modern society, are the highly successful co-operative agricultural communities established in Palestine, in Mexico and under the Farm Security Administration in the USA. At Valence in France a very successful experi-

ment is taking place. In this case the co-operative community combines a highly skilled industry (the manufacture of watch-cases) with agriculture. I do not pretend that these experiments prove the case for an anarchist society. But they are highly significant tests of the human capacity for co-operative living–experiments which give us every confidence in the social and economic soundness of our wider proposals.

I am old enough to remember the days, before 1917, when people would say: Oh, socialism is all right in theory, but it could never be put into practice. Against such an argument socialists of that time could only put their faith–a faith which, we must admit, has been amply justified. Now on every side we meet the same argument against anarchism, against the co-operative commonwealth. No feudal baron could have believed in a world ruled by merchants and money-lenders; and in their turn these merchants and money-lenders refused for a long time to believe in the possibility of a world ruled by bureaucrats. I do not expect that many of my listeners can believe in a world in which the very idea of rule is abolished, in which we live by mutual aid, in which all thought of profit, all aggressive impulses, the concept of national sovereignty and the practice of armed imperialism, are forever absent. But when you consider the world in all its moral and economic chaos, when you see humanity fearfully transfixed by the threat of atomic warfare, can you for a moment believe that our civilization will be saved by any change less profound than that which I have described tonight?

Reprinted in *A One-Man Manifesto and Other Writings for Freedom Press* (London: Freedom Press, 1994), ed. David Goodway

Marie Louise Berneri (1918–1949)

In Volume Two of Anarchism: A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas, I also included three selections from Marie Louise Berneri (1918–1949), the talented anarchist journalist and writer.

To begin, Macdonald quotes Karl Liebknecht's World War I dictum, "The main enemy is at home!" He declares that this classic expression of the anti-militarist (though not necessarily pacifist) position does not hold good, and says: "Those who still believe it I must regard as either uninformed, sentimental, or the dupes of Soviet propaganda (or, of course, all three together)."

Let us begin from there. It is true that some pacifists are uninformed on Russia, and that a few of them–particularly among the Quakers–tend to become the dupes of Soviet propaganda about Russia being the representative of world peace. However, I think that the proportion of opponents of war preparations who are in either of these positions is much smaller than Macdonald believes, and I know that it is not true of any of the anarchists, to whatever branch of our very elastic movement they may belong. For more than thirty years we and our predecessors have been insisting on the reactionary character of Russian communism, and when it was considered unpatriotic in Britain and the United States to denounce Stalin as a dictator no better than Hitler, we were among the few who continued to do so. We are the last ever to have been the dupes of Soviet propaganda.

So, since I am sure that Macdonald would hardly persist in bringing these two accusations against the anarchists at least, I will concentrate on the third accusation, that we are "sentimental". My contention is that we are in fact more realistic by far than those radicals or ex-radicals who have shouldered their harps of peace and, like the minstrel boy of the ballad, are now to be found in the ranks of war.

To begin, let me say that I do not in the least disagree with Macdonald in preferring the West to the East as a place to live in. Nobody but the most idiotic and starry-eyed fellow-traveller would think it better to live in Moscow than in London or San Francisco or Montreal or Paris. There is no comparison between the nature of life in a capitalist democracy at the present moment, despite its manifold injustices and discomforts, and the nature of life in Russia

However, both were inspired by the resurgence of anarchism in the 1960s, although Woodcock insisted that what emerged in the 1960s was a "new" anarchism quite distinct from the class-struggle anarchism of the past, from which he was already distancing himself in the mid-1950s, as his remarks below make clear.

I included excerpts from Woodcock's 1944 critique of technology and organization, "The Tyranny of the Clock," originally published in Macdonald's Politics magazine, as well as excerpts from the original 1946 edition of Macdonald's The Root is Man, in Volume Two of Anarchism: A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas.

Libertarians and the War

I believe that there is always need for a perpetual reconsideration of the validity of every aspect of our viewpoints. In left-wing circles, and particularly among Marxists, the word "revisionism" has often a pejorative sound; I believe that the attitude which this displays merely shows a resistance to growth among the people who hold it. And I am definitely out of sympathy with the romanticism of those last-ditchers who hold their positions out of an illusion of loyalty and a horror of self-contradiction. Every man whose ideas are living and growing must contradict himself many times during his life, and I am with Whitman and Proudhon in finding no reason for shame in this. But I do see reason for shame in holding on to a position unless I believe that, all things considered, it still remains the best and most reasonable.

Dwight Macdonald

Therefore I acknowledge and respect Macdonald's change in his position on war, and I think we should consider carefully what he has to say in his own justification. At the same time I must say that I have found his arguments for radicals to enroll themselves in the cause of the Western states wholly unconvincing.

Berneri was born in Italy, one of the daughters of Camillo Berneri and Giovanna Berneri, prominent anarchists at the forefront of the struggle against fascism. They were forced to flee Italy in 1926. Marie Louise went to university in France, where she worked with Louis Mercier Vega (I included excerpts from Mercier Vega's 1970 essay, "Yesterday's Society and Today's," in Volume Two as Selections 45 & 66). In May 1937, Camillo Berneri was murdered in Spain, probably by Stalinist agents. Marie Louise ended up in England, where she campaigned on behalf of the Spanish anarchists and helped revitalize the English anarchist movement. She wrote prolifically for the English anarchist papers, Spain and the World, then War Commentary, then Freedom. After her untimely death in 1949, a collection of her articles was published under the title, Neither East Nor West (1952), emphasizing the anarchist rejection of the false Cold War dichotomy posed by the ideologists of the capitalist West and the Communist East, and the need for an anarchist alternative. The following excerpts are from her 1944 essay, "By Fire and Sword," later included in the chapter in Neither East Nor West on the "price of war," from which I reproduced additional extracts in Volume Two of the Anarchism anthology as Selection 4. I also included in Volume Two of Anarchism–The Emergence of the New Anarchism, excerpts from her study of literary utopias, *Journey Through Utopia* (1949), as Selection 15, and her 1945 article, "Wilhelm Reich and the Sexual Revolution," as Selection 75.

The Price of War: By Fire and Sword

Paris 1944

IN THE PREFACE to the Baedeker for Paris and its surroundings, published in 1881, one finds a description of the "most deplorable recent disasters caused by the fiendish proceedings of the Communists during the second 'reign of Terror,' 20th-28th May, 1871." According to the writer, "Within that week of horrors no fewer than twenty-two important public buildings and monuments were

wholly or partly destroyed, and a similar fate overtook seven railway stations, the four principal public parks and gardens, and hundreds of dwelling- houses and other buildings."

If Baron Karl Baedeker would have had to write a preface to a guide to Paris in the years which will follow the present war he would probably have had to record far more "fiendish" proceedings on the parts of the retreating German army and the victorious bulldozing, all-levelling armies of "liberation". There will be a difference, however; the scars that Paris, like the other French towns of Caen, Cherbourg and many more will wear will be noble scars of which the French people will be asked to be proud, and it is doubtful if they will receive slighting references, such as those levelled at the Commune, by the generations of guide-writers to come.

It is the privilege of revolutions that the acts of violence to which they give rise have always received the utmost publicity in newspapers, history books, novels, plays, films… and even travellers' books. The horrors of war are forgotten or are glorified for the benefit of tourists, like the ruins of Verdun. But everything conspires to keep alive in people's minds the acts of violence which have taken place during revolutions. Ask any French schoolboy what was the most bloody period in the history of France and he will most probably mention the period of the Terror during the French Revolution. A few thousand people were killed during that period, a small number compared with the Napoleonic wars; an infinitesimal figure compared with the casualties in the war of 1914–1918. Yet the French school boy will know all about the horrors of the French Revolution, the killing of priests and nobles, the death in captivity of Louis the Sixteenth's heir and the beheading of Marie-Antoinette. But he will know nothing about the million dead of the First World War and the hundreds of thousands of children who died of starvation and disease as a result of it.

Revolutions spell wholesale murder and destruction not only to schoolchildren. How many times have experienced socialist politicians and learned Fabian professors advocated submission and

One barrier against this threat is for the individual to have the option to dissent from certain things or certain tendencies which he deems inappropriate and of no social utility, the chance of switching across to the opposition, which is to say, the minority. There are other barriers as well: federalist organization per se, direct and limited election of officers, genuine participation by ordinary members of the organization, the struggle being economic rather than political, etc…

Organisation Pensee Bataille

Noir et Rouge, No. 10, June 1958

George Woodcock

George Woodcock (1912–1995) is perhaps best known for his 1962 publication, Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements, an eloquent and captivating, but ultimately pessimistic, history of anarchist ideas and movements, in which he concluded that anarchism was one of the "great lost causes" of history.

In the mid-1950s, Woodcock took a much more optimistic approach, despite the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union that threatened the entire world with nuclear annihilation. In the following excerpts from Woodcock's review of the 1953 reissue of Dwight Macdonald's The Root is Man, Woodcock takes Macdonald to task for arguing in favour of "critical" support for the West in opposition to Soviet totalitarianism, rejecting Macdonald's pessimism in the hope that movements against war and state power would eventually emerge. Ironically, when such movements did begin to emerge in the late 1950s and early 1960s in Europe and America, Woodcock had ceased to identify himself as an anarchist, and appeared to be slipping into the same pessimism as Macdonald.

A genuinely democratic organization can be identified on the basis of its behaviour vis-a-vis its own opposition. This is all the more true of a libertarian organization which aims to lay the groundwork for the society of the future. Every time that a majority discusses and enforces the majority-prescribed parameters within which the opposition has to operate, there can be two reasons for this: either the membership was very widely based, or, inside that organization, there are persons itching to play the parts of leaders. These two possibilities are not mutually exclusive: such and such a member keen to take charge of the organization will draft in new members in order to boost his chances of winning majority support.

Outside our own organizations, can we require and practice rejection of majority rule? This is a thornier issue, for circumstances differ, and the aim is primarily to promote our ideas without betraying them. But here too, we must ensure that even the victorious majority does not crush the spirit of the minority, not just because of the danger of finding ourselves in the same position someday (revolutionary movements being most often minority movements) but also because of our anti-totalitarian outlook and tolerance. Every time that a leader or panel of leaders starts to claim absolute mastery, they end up turning on one another and will arrive at a dictatorship, camouflaged or brazen. The first sign of a future "head of State" or "people's leader' is the hatred he bears his own comrades who cannot stand him in that role. After which there is no stopping his appetite for authority, the parameters of which become increasingly broadened and boundless.

Every organization, no matter what it may be, is a compromise between one person and the rest vis-a-vis the imperatives of social life. Meaning that every individual must inevitably renounce certain tendencies or habits which are unacceptable or harmful to society. And as a result, inside every organization, there is a risk of the sacrifices required of individuals for society's sake going beyond the needs of society per se and turning an abstraction like the State, the bureaucracy, the leader, historical necessity, etc…

compromise with the ruling class by waving the spectre of bloody revolution in front of the misguided masses? It was with tears in his eyes that Leon Blum asked the French people not to intervene in the Spanish revolution. It was in order to "spare lives" that he watched one of the most splendid revolutionary movements suffocated and allowed the Fascist powers to gain military experience to fight a world war. Of course, when the present war started, Leon Blum forgot all his sensitive love for humanity and urged French people to go to the massacre. As everyone knows revolutions are bloody affairs but to die wholesale for the motherland is called supreme and sublime sacrifice, so that in these cases death does not really count.

One can easily prophesy that after this war there will still be those people to talk about the horrors of the Commune and of the shooting of fascists, capitalists and priests in Spain. But the bombing of Hamburg, Paris and London; the bombardment of Caen; the sinking of troopships; the death in the skies of thousands of young men; the starvation and pestilence devastating scores of countries: these will all be classified as necessary evils, unavoidable curses which humanity must be proud to endure. Revolutionists once again will be considered bloodthirsty fellows who had better be kept locked up and if the choice between war and revolution again presents itself, Christians, socialists and communists no doubt will, on humanitarian grounds, again choose war.

Paul Goodman (1911–1972)

In Volume Two of *Anarchism: A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas*, I included several selections by Paul Goodman (1911–1972), a pivotal figure in the post-war resurgence of anarchism. Goodman was a poet, novelist, playwright, lay psychoanalyst, social critic and political activist. One of his most influential writings was The May Pamphlet (1946), his anarchist anti-war statement in

which he summed up his general social philosophy: "A free society cannot be the substitution of a 'new order' for the old order; it is the extension of spheres of free action until they make up most of the social life" (Volume Two, Selection 11). With his brother Percival, he wrote Communitas–Means of Livelihood and Ways of Life (1947), in which they present three community paradigms for post-war society, the second being an update of Kropotkin's Fields, Factories and Workshops (Volume One, Selection 34), in which the difference between production and consumption would be eliminated (Volume Two, Selection 17).

In the face of the apathy, conformism and unfulfilling consumerism of post-war America, amid the threat of nuclear annihilation, Goodman observed that it "is inevitable that there should be a public dream of universal disaster, with explosions, fires, and electric-shocks; and people pool their efforts to bring this apocalypse to an actuality" in a society geared "toward sadism and primary masochism" (Volume Two, Selection 37). Applying this analysis to the problems of youth in post-war society, Goodman achieved prominence as a social critic, particularly with the publication of Growing Up Absurd: Problems of Youth in the Organized Society in 1960, and Compulsory Miseducation in 1964. He was an advocate of human scale technology (Volume Two, Selection 70), a vocal opponent of the U.S. war in Vietnam and a frequent contributor to the New York Review of Books.

After the Second World War, when there was talk of turning the U.S. Army back into a volunteer force (something that was not to happen until 1973), Goodman wrote the following open letter to high school graduates. Seeing that the Army continues to rely on "volunteers," his comments remain pertinent today.

Letter to high school graduates

Dear Graduate:

overly-starry-eyed. Ideas themselves are not set in stone and are liable to evolve. So if the differences of opinion are of a significantly theoretical order, it would be better for the organization if it were to fall apart and for there to be two or several new more or less homogeneous organizations, than for one heterogeneous organization to be retained. This is inevitable, and if any attempt is made to stem this trend, it is at that point that there is a risk of everything coming to a halt and grinding to a standstill, through the quest for anodyne compromises that forestall disintegration but also prevent movement in any direction at all.

The other factor mentioned earlier–anarchist morality–if properly understood and implemented in life will help greatly to smooth over minor frictions, and also the disintegration of the organization should it come–through acceptance of an opinion that differs from one's own, without writing it off as the opinion of an enemy or taking up arms against it. Provided, of course, that we are not dealing with a view completely outside the parameters of anarchism. The history of anarchism has had only a few specific instances of this sort to show and this latter likelihood can virtually be discounted.

There is a considerable part to be played in anarchist organizations by an internal bulletin wherein there can be an open forum for all matters of concern to the organization, including dissenting viewpoints.

There is a further factor tied to the organization: comrades joining this organization must freely embrace its necessity and its role. That much is self-evident. Anybody who cannot see beyond the narrow confines of the individual, who cannot imagine social structures beyond scattered, isolated individuals, will be better advised to stay isolated, helping others as and when he sees fit, but not hampering the organization through uncompromising, maverick practices. Some other designation will have to be devised for comrades of this sort, who are often very good comrades in fact, and they will have to be accepted for what they are.

body else. So we will run into nonsensical, unsolicited obstruction which can paralyze and stymie the organization just when it ought to be acting with the greatest speed–and what, then, are we to do? It happens.

But this argument is founded upon two mistakes: the notion of a homogeneous specific organization and the notion of anarchist morality.

When the members of an organization are bound together not only by reasonably friendly personal relations, but also and primarily by a given number of ideological and tactical principles–enough common ground to justify the claim that organization is homogeneous–the dangers of significant differences of opinion are minimal. This is one of the reasons why we stick to the views and practice of a "specific anarchist group" which we refuse to dilute or see diluted for us. Just let a new practice be adopted–"come all ye who are for freedom" or "against the State," or even "anarchism generally"–and the next day, friction on some issue will be inevitable. Heterogeneity carries another consequence: the existence of groups of "initiates" (with a foot in several groups at once, maybe) which are, most of the time, secret or semi-secret: and every one of them aims to make the running) their consciences clear that they are "leading others along the righteous path"… which will very quickly degenerate into internecine squabbling, into an OPB, * into leaders and masses. Thus there are not just a majority and a minority but a number of concentric circles, most often revolving around some "master-mind" (which releases the others from any requirement to think), each suspicious of the other, each of them pursuing his own little schemes behind the scenes or in the open, trying to win others over to his faction, and all of this overlaid with a blithe semblance of unity. This is an unwholesome climate that neither educates nor builds upright, honest individuals. It is a "den of parliamentarianism" in miniature.

Even so, though, and in spite of the variety of the views, differences of opinion and debates that may emerge, we should not be

The congress is still squirming about deciding to extend the draft act, in the face of opposition of labor unions, farmers, religious organizations and other bodies of voters that seem to retain a little sanity on this direct personal issue though they cooperated with the war in their manufactures, taxes, dishonest sermons, and general compliance. The recalcitrance of the public and the congressmen's fear of losing their jobs have put it up to the Army to offer added inducements to volunteers, in case the draft lapses. That is, unable to persuade the minds of adults, the Army turns its appeal to the immature graduates of high school, who in school have learned nothing of the facts of our social life and who, immured in their homes and schools, have had no chance of learning anything by direct experience.

The truth is that the inducements for a youth to volunteer are indeed persuasive; the Army has a good case. A good case to entice a young man into an unproductive waste of his years, subservient to ignorant officers, dedicated to a purpose admitted to be universally disastrous, and in a status that up to now in American peacetime history has always been regarded with contempt by the citizens. Nevertheless the Army has a good case! What an indictment of the state of our institutions if even the Army has a good case!

THREE MAIN CAUSES

Omitting the prospect of being drafted willy-nilly, there are three main causes, interdependent on each other, that bring young men to volunteer: (a) The pressure of making a living and finding a job. (b) The fear of responsible independence. (c) The need to escape from home. On all those three counts the Army seems to provide the best solution available in the institutions–unless the young man opens his eyes, frees himself from the fear of authority, and joyfully works to change those institutions.

(a) I have before me a crude mimeographed circular distributed by the Army Recruiting Station, 29 East Fordham Road, The Bronx, New York. It begins:

Dear Graduate, Congratulations upon your successful completion of High School. You are now standing at the crossroads of your world.

And the circular then presents a diagram of 3 roads:

1. Career Road: To Security! Career! 20-year Retirement with Army.

2. Education Avenue: To College! Five Years free after 3 years in regular Army.

3. Doubtful Lane? Civilian Job. No Security. Career Questionable. Retire–when? Education–Maybe.

Doubtful Lane?! Such is the breakdown of the system of "free enterprise" that up to now has been the chief apology for American capitalism!

"Let's face facts," the circular goes on. "Millions of veterans are coming back into civilian life. They need jobs and have first priority, etc."

What gall!! to dare to argue from these "facts"! It is precisely the top of the hierarchy of this Army that has persistently withstood every struggle to improve economic conditions; this Army that has broken strikes when strikes were not yet controlled by the labor-bureaucracies and that will again break strikes; this Army that must be filled in order to protect American "commitments" abroad, and the commitments are nothing but the interests of the very class and the very State that maintain the conditions of "no security, career questionable, education maybe." The Army helps to create and maintain the facts and then says face the facts. Is not this form of persuasion known as extortion?

I am myself academically trained, and I am astonished and ashamed to see how the colleges and the universities have grasped at these Army subsidies and fees. It is the end of free research and liberal education, for he who pays the piper calls the tune. The technical training of which the Army boasts will, for a time, invent new weapons, but it will not advance science.

ment's honour, including the honour of those who had consented to compromise.

The majority principle derives from the practice of the political struggle, from universal suffrage, from parliamentarianism. There, it is necessary, nay, the only indispensable factor in the smooth running of the system. The struggle to win a majority has never been and never will be open and honest. In order to win votes, no one shows his true face, the mechanisms of his game or the real aims he has in mind. The most revolutionary appeals are merely vague propositions likely to attract a broad swathe of individuals: the most ** po-faced sermons are only the ravings of rabble-rousers trying to stir the basest sentiments of the mob, be it selfish or sham-humanitarian. This grand parade of fine talkers is well orchestrated from behind the scenes through the use of intimidation, economic and other threats, as well as promises and special advantages. In authoritarian regimes, this backstage activity is even more transparent and the real agents of the majority (the official and political police, direct or indirect oppression) tread the boards, flourishing their "arguments"; they do not even trouble to mount a few minor displays against the recalcitrant so as to make an example for the rest, and to arrive at the ideal majority… 99.99%. But that danger lurks even within non-authoritarian, democratic, indeed, libertarian organizations, when the principle of majority rule is embraced along with the competition to win a majority. We have seen supposedly libertarian congresses hatched behind the scenes, with the parts and the speeches allocated in advance and even propaganda tailor-made for each delegate, and we have also witnessed the outcome.

This "Fontenis-style" phenomenon ought not to be repeated.

But there will always be some who are not convinced, some who hold back, even if only for strictly personal reasons: we know about the unconfessed role that has been played by personal relations, even in strictly political, economic or ideological organizations. We cannot make it a requirement that everyone hits it off with every-

ence is very convincing but by the time it is noticed it is too late to change anything and everything has to be embraced or allowed to fall by the wayside. Right from the very first steps taken together, we must devise a theoretical and practical line of policy acceptable to all and, in this context, the minority-majority issue can tilt the balance in one direction or the other.

As we see it, the operation of a federalist organization is incompatible with retention of the principle of majority rule. There is a real majority in the form of a freely conceived, freely accepted unanimity. Any other majority, be it a two thirds majority, an absolute or simple majority, with all manner of implications, constitutes a majority only as far as those who accept it are concerned; as far as others are concerned, it is worthless and cannot be considered binding.

Every time an attempt is made to foist a policy upon others, on one ground or another, one arrives at a contrived, fragile, unstable unity. Of course, in every case one finds and is going to find "special circumstances, historical necessities"–but then, what moment in humanity's march towards its happiness is not historical? And it is not hard for those in need of that majority to prate on about special circumstances.

But… "without a majority, no decision can be arrived at and in the absence of decisions, an organization is worthless, a shambles." This is the chief charge levelled at libertarians by authority lovers and, it has to be said, by certain libertarians. But experience flies in the face of such reasoning. Not only are there organizations in existence that are built on this foundation, but there have been instances where, without any votes being counted, there was a real majority… 19 July 1936, the May events in Barcelona in 1937… but there was no majority when the anarchists were "obliged" to collaborate with the government, at which point our adversaries started to roil about the existence of an opposition and a minority and to carp about the anarchists' weakness and lack of discipline. Yet it was the existence of that very minority that salvaged the move-

(b) Even so, this economic argument of the Army circular would not be persuasive if it were not for the attitude of timidity, lack of self-confidence, and general lack of cultural and social interest with which it is received by the young men; for no independent and intellectually active youth would sacrifice during these exciting years of his life his freedom to explore and take his chances. But the pressure of parental economic anxiety has long since created in the child's mind the feeling that it is impossible to make a living; the young man, bullied and beaten at home, secretly believes that he is worthless and could never make a go of it. Further, he is secretly afraid to be economically independent, for such independence implies also sexual independence and perhaps marriage, but long deprivation and coercive taboos have invested this idea with terrible anxiety and guilt. Fundamentally, to go it alone means to dare to take father's place and even perhaps to become a father; but the child has long observed that father himself could not fulfill the responsibility in our society; how much the less can he, whom father has so often banged down and called a fool? Furthermore, years of mis-education have by now stifled every impulse of curiosity, cultural interest, and creative ambition that normally arises in growing boys; in his schooling no natural bent has been encouraged; now, consequently, every human activity seems impenetrably mysterious–the youth is sure that wherever he turns he will make a fool of himself; his ego resists the challenge with all its might.

But behold! the Army solves all problems. It imposes in an even stricter form the parental discipline and punishment that the soul craves; and in a better form, for there is at least no admixture of love. At the same time it releases one from all responsibility; the Army provides every safety as it prepares its members for the moment of extremest danger. In the Army the young man has a disciplined irresponsibility. In the endless hierarchy of the Army it will even be possible for the young man to bully someone in turn, for there is always a newcomer with one less stripe.

(c) And to get away from home! Really away and far away! This also the Army provides. But apart from the Army, as things are in our society, even if the young man finds a job he will still have to remain for several years within the accursed parental walls, his new contribution merely creating a new friction. If his family is what we can observe nine out of ten families to be, it will forever be impossible for the children to grow up to regard their parents as equal human beings for whom one has a special affection. The relations have become strained. It is forever impossible for the youth to express the love that is at the bottom of his heart; it is equally impossible to express the rage that is boiling up from the bottom to the top, and knock the old man down. Therefore the best thing is to get away quick, because the next battle will be worse than the last one–but in the Army one can fight guiltlessly against foreigners and anarchists.

These are, I think, the main reasons that lead the young men to volunteer. Of course there are many corollaries that spring from one or another of them; the pride of uniform, the camaraderie of the other fellows in the same boat, travel, the feverish fantasy of sexual license in strange towns etc., etc. I should be much surprised, however, if among these motives there often occurred a false sentiment of patriotism. The Americans are not yet so co-ordinated as to imagine that there is a need for this Army.

What then? I hope I have filled out the case of the Army circular so as to present their offer in its full attractiveness. I hope that a few young men who might see this will have a small feeling of shame at their plight, and then a great burst of laughter.

Young men! you are indeed at the crossroads–the circular is right. On the one hand are the specious and lying and not unchangeable "facts" that they tell you and that you perhaps inwardly fear. On the other hand is the simple truth: that you are not worthless, you have great powers in you; the world is full of interesting possibilities, creative jobs, crafts, arts, and sciences that are not impenetrable mysteries; we need each other's mutual aid and no one

Noir et Rouge

In Volume 2 of Anarchism: A *Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas*, I included several selections from the French anarchist journal *Noir et Rouge* (1956–1970), including material on national liberation and anti-colonialism, draft resistance against the French war against Algerian independence (Selection 31), and new directions in anarchist theory (Selection 47). *Noir et Rouge* (Black and Red, the traditional colours of class struggle anarchism) was published by the Groupes Anarchistes d'Action Revolutionaire (Revolutionary Action Anarchist Groups), one of the many French anarchist groups that emerged following the split in the French anarchist movement between Georges Fontenis and the Libertarian Communist Federation, which tried to unite anarchists and other ultra-leftists into a more conventional revolutionary party, and those anarchists who felt the Fontenis approach was dogmatic and authoritarian (see the post from Giovanna Berneri). In the following excerpts from Noir et Rouge, translated by Paul Sharkey, the GAAR sets forth its position on the debate regarding majority rule, defending the right of the minority to follow its own path. Noir et Rouge, with its more fluid conception of anarchist organization, influenced the student revolutionaries of May 1968 in France.

Majority and Minority

Can a majority claim to speak for on organization? Are its decisions binding upon the organization? How is the minority treated in terms of its expression, its conduct, its very existence within the ranks of that organization?

At first glance, all these questions appear to be of secondary interest, but in fact they are of considerable significance when one wishes to live inside an organization and wants that organization to live. And there can be no "laissez-faire, time will tell, every case is a case apart, with a little good will…" approach, for often experi-

The initial milieu of all such education is the family, and it is to the extension of knowledge through parental teaching and example that I feel science must attempt to direct itself. The influence of health instruction through guidance and child welfare clinics is already apparent in an increased rationality in parental attitudes towards masturbation and adult attitudes towards taboo manifestations of sexuality. A wider and more courageous encouragement and toleration of pre-adult sexual play among adolescents and an extension of the teaching of erotics to adults are both desirable on the evidence at our disposal. By such means the extension of the rational attitude, of the motto of Rabelais' Abbey of Thelema, "Do what you will," with the added clause, "provided it harms no-one," may be brought about. If there is a single phrase to write over the door of the marriage guidance clinic, it is "There is nothing to fear."

But advances in this field join hands at every point with the need for advances in education, in social living, and in the forgotten art of being human. At present there is evidence that the most educated groups, by long study and struggle, are regaining the kind of normality which is general in the behaviour of lower animals. Like all forms of sociological investigation, sexual knowledge finds that it can make little effective progress without the total reorientation of society toward the concepts of freedom and individual responsibility which recur throughout modern work, but time is short, and the tendency of events is running strongly in the direction of increased coercion. In such circumstances, while study and investigation are essential, it is with the active resistance of the individual to these trends, by the power of disobedience, of non-adaptation to death, that the future of social progress rests. The struggle against power is the concern of psychology and medicine, as of every other science, because it is the concern of man.

is unappreciated or isolated; sexual love is guiltless and therefore not far to seek. You need money enough for health and happiness, not to buy what is pictured in advertisements and the movies, and if on our rich earth you can't get this much without going into the Army, you ought damn well seek out who's stopping you.

The inducements of the Army are not very different than extortion. Help us to change the "facts," to free yourselves and set each other free!

Paul Goodman,

April 1946

"Dear Graduate" was originally published in the anarchist magazine, Why?, which was later renamed Resistance, a journal which gave expression to the new directions in anarchist theory being taken by anarchists in response to the social changes that followed the Second World War. In Volume Two of Anarchism, I included two other contributions to Resistance, a 1953 article by David Thoreau Wieck in which he discusses, years before the situationists, how to resist a society in which "a small number of people, more or less talented, shall make… under the usual consumption-oriented conditions of the market, our 'works of art,' our 'entertainment,' while the rest of us are spectators" (Selection 39), and a 1954 article by David Dellinger on small group communal living, something that became popular among disaffected youth in the 1960s and 70s (Selection 40).

David Thoreau Wieck (1921–1997)

David Thoreau Wieck (1921–1997) was part of the new generation of anarchists to emerge after the Second World War, helping to spark the resurgence of anarchist ideas and movements of the 1960s. He came to anarchism during the Spanish Revolution and Civil War (1936–1939), while he was still a teenager. During the Second World War he spent 34 months in prison as a war resister

and was involved there in protests against racial segregation. After his release, he became involved with the anarchist paper, Why?, later renamed Resistance, which he wrote for and edited during the 1950s. I included one of his pieces from Resistance in Volume Two of Anarchism: A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas. The following piece, in which Wieck discusses the importance, and the limits, of the "militant pacifist" movements which began using civil disobedience to protest war and racial discrimination in the U.S. in the 1950s, was originally published in Resistance, Volume XII, No. 1, in April 1954. Other noteworthy essays by Wieck include "The Negativity of Anarchism" and "Anarchist Justice" (1978).

From Politics to Social Revolution

It is now nearly a decade since the end of the war, and nothing in this breathing-space–let us be plain–gives even modest hope or satisfaction to people who desire peace, economic justice, freedom. Our social condition calls for a radical step, the exercise of our highest powers, uncalculated risks–to know this requires only a look at our world of permanent war, of clashing empire States, of Government and Business bureaucracy, of the current inquisition. History, the blind momentum of a blind past, is not rescuing us; even on the rare occasions when one can take a sensible action in relation to the big National Questions, it can hardly be with illusions that the best outcome will bring us sensibly nearer a good society; the Labor Movement is not resurgent, and the people give no ear to appeals to rise up and change it all. It is necessary to invent something else to do, and taken as a whole radicals have not been too inventive.

Now to invent "something else to do" is not at all easy–especially one does not tell someone else what to invent! It is possible, however, to give a rough description of what is needed. It is the more necessary to do so, since it is widely believed that we need "new directions." It happens that the right directions are really quite old,

relation between this branch of human conduct and social institutions in general makes it impossible to modify either except by way of the other. A general outbreak of public resistance to militarism would contribute more to the removal of sexual imbalance than any action through the channels which we have come to regard as political. The problem is that of human freedom, and human freedom has little to do with institutions or the reform of institutions. Yet there is a stronger case for reformist action as a stop-gap treatment in this field than in any other. While we cannot excise the problem radically until megalopolitanism destroys itself or is superseded through the direct action of peoples, that does not mean that we can afford to withhold first-aid measures.

Scientific research to devise a genuinely reliable contraceptive is of much importance. The continuance of public pressure through the machinery of power, as well as against it, seems to me well worthwhile. There are certain limited objectives, the end of conscription, the abolition of literary censorship, the destruction of the mediaeval elements in sexual law, and a wide dissemination of erotic knowledge and technique, all of them reasonably accessible to direct public pressure within the existing framework of society, in which many people who do not accept the ideological implications of much that I have said would be able to co-operate. Constructive experiments in communal health such as the Peckham Experiment [see Colin Ward, Anarchy in Action] contribute more to mental and physical hygiene than oceans of welfare services and good intentions. Reform of the penal treatment of sexual offenders, repeal of laws such as those relating to nudity and to indecent literature, and other measures such as the extension of child, adolescent, and adult sex education have impressive support. While they are in no sense a substitute for a free society they are a means toward it, and insofar as any victory for reasonable and biologically-founded principle over fear and irrationalism is a victory for man, such advances, however obtained, are in fact the means of a wider and more fundamental revolution in the structure of living.

and directed towards death and nullity, or [Carl] Jung to tell him that his family relationships are distorted out of all recognition, or Boyd Orr and McCance to tell the peasants and workers of huge areas of the world that they are starving. The social conditioning of venereal disease and prostitution, like that of war and power, is increasingly obvious, and the remedy lies jointly in the hands of the scientific worker and the public–it is with the individual that the ultimate power of action, if only by an unconstructive but effective recalcitrance to bad institutions, rests. Without this, the enormous resources of experimental science are bound to be in a great measure nullified and wasted.

Some Conclusions

Coercive morality, like coercive society, is breaking down. It cannot be reformed, only replaced by freedom or by a repetition of past errors. And while to a certain extent the individual can reform his own sexual life, and practice the freedom which I have described, we have to face the fact that until coercive societies are destroyed we cannot attain any general measure of biological normality. So long as it has megalopolitanism and war to contend with, sexuality cannot be in any sense normal. He who wants to eat must work– he who wants to attain a normal and satisfying sexual relationship, based on love, freedom, and responsibility for himself and his children must be prepared to fight for it by disobedience. Sexual freedom and political tyranny cannot co-exist, and it is to be hoped and expected that humanity, driven and inspired by the urgency with which its nature demands the first, will destroy the second.

It is because the whole emphasis of anarchist thought is upon the removal of power and the refusal to employ power-institutions as a vehicle for reformist measures that it seems to me to embody the most comprehensive and scientifically legitimate approach to sexual ethics. I think I have made it clear that the closeness of the

and almost obvious, and so thoroughly ignored! So one cannot go amiss to speak of them.

Militant Pacifism

The one striking innovation on the American radical scene is the campaign of civil disobedience waged by the militant pacifists, inspired directly by Gandhi and derivatively by Thoreau. I want to discuss this movement a little–to give it the praise that is due it, and to use its limitations to show crucial neglected directions in the thinking of American radicals.

Today being March 15 the mail carries news that 43 individuals have refused to pay income-tax this year. Over the last few years a certain number have been imprisoned for draft resistance; until silenced by the Government's post-office regulations, the paper Alternative carried on vigorous agitation along these lines, as for a time did the Catholic Worker. Recently many of the same people, most of them associated with the Peacemakers movement, have issued a declaration of non-cooperation with Congressional inquisition and affirmation of intention to exercise free speech.

For reasons we come to later, anarchists have criticized this program, no doubt unduly harshly. Of all radical movements pacifism is the weakest theoretically, it is a sitting duck. But the fact remains that these persons, at sacrifice or at least risk, have made a symbolic gesture of protest. Not everyone else has done something and theirs is an admirable "propaganda of the deed," deserving honor.

But Militant Pacifism is not a general method of social action, and its chief error is precisely in not seeing this. It is a technique. It is what some people have to do, as a matter of integrity. It is a practical weapon of some importance. But as a matter of demonstrable fact, it is not a method of changing society.

The history of civil disobedience illustrates our point. Thoreau was protesting against a particular law, the Fugitive Slave Law, a law that widespread disobedience could have put out of commis-

sion without more ado. More generally he saw civil disobedience as a way for citizens to exercise a continuing vigilance and personal responsibility toward law and government. But suppose the government is not fundamentally a sensible one, suppose it has been built up by a patchwork remedying of evils by lesser evils–what sort of way of life will this be, with the conscientious citizens spending most of their time in jail? (It is a nice thing to say, that in certain societies a free man "belongs" in prison; but except as a revolutionary slogan it is a mighty unpleasant suggestion). Or suppose the evils–in our case, the wars and armies and the rest–are not a foolish excrescence on a healthy body social, but part of the very fabric of society–how can the government retract and remedy it?

This is why a social revolution is needed, and why energies should not go to influencing the government, but to changing the total system.

The scope of the problem to which civil disobedience was applied in India was also very narrow, a fact obscured by the size of the nation. The single point in question was, would the government of India be British or Indian? Economic, communal and other relations remained the same, the British rulers had only to get enough of harassing and shaming and finally to devise a reasonably graceful way to get out. (Incidentally, it was probably the failure of Gandhism that it dissociated the independence and social questions).

Our problem in America, to repeat, is the different one of social revolution. "Wars will cease when men refuse to fight"–only if they re-order the society so as to eliminate the drives to war, the necessity for war.

Now there are two ways, just two, of conceiving a social revolution, of solving the problem that pacifism attempts to ignore. The one is by means of government: socialist; and the other is outside of government, and abolishing it: anarchist. Or to put it perhaps more meaningfully: in the socialist case the revolutionists obtain

of psychopaths but as a fully conscious and deliberate re-adoption of human responsibility. That a man should recognise and fight against his traditional enemies, Death, Power, and Fear, is the first step towards normality and freedom; and with this cause the psychologist must be prepared to ally himself if he is not willing to become a traitor to his vocation and to his species…

Physicians, more than any others, are apt to accept reformist methods because they are obliged in conscience to palliate, when they cannot cure. The "cause" of gonorrhoea is not the gonococcus; it is at present just, as much "caused" by Hitler, his opponents, London, Berlin, Glasgow, unemployment. We can kill or segregate the organisms, but it is not always possible to deal with the other causes by similarly immediate measures. Reformist activity, in sexual matters, as in other branches of medicine, has achieved a certain amount, within its somewhat narrow limitations. It has at least brought matters into a state where they can be openly discussed. But for the investigator faced with the social problem of venereal infection, reform has reached its limits. Without the removal of war, no further progress is possible, and the roots of war lie in the structure of power–regulated societies.

The impact of political and sociological theory and action on medicine are nowhere so marked as in the field of sexual hygiene–the physician to whom public health is something more than the passive acceptance of public disease has reached the limit of his resources, and behind the psychical illnesses and the syphilis lie tuberculosis, malnutrition, occupational trauma, premature senility, and a host of conditions, all manifestly and grossly conditioned by social forces, which legions of social-workers, millions of pounds and excellent intentions are wholly impotent to tackle. There is the problem, and there are its causes–the logic of medicine is, or ought to be, capable of the decision involved. And yet the natural recalcitrance of the individual shows signs of outpacing the scientific observer–it does not need [Lewis] Mumford and [Patrick] Geddes to tell the city-dweller that his life is unhealthy, uneconomic

evokes overtones at both higher and lower levels of cerebral activity. The importance of the physiological conception is that this impulse, together with aggression and masochism, is both a component of the desire to govern and a means consciously employed by government–one can deliberately manufacture sadists by conditioning and it is a feature of barbarism that it does so–one can also make them by the destruction of creative freedom:

"The individual must be vouchsafed the opportunity to gratify the life-instinct of providing food, shelter, and the release of the sexual urge in socially accepted ways–otherwise frustration with its train of neurotic manifestations may fortify the death instinct… Suicide and all manifestations of masochism derive from the death-instinct. So do homicide, war, and that complex of aggressions known as the sadistic impulse. Love in all its sexual connotations springs from the life-instinct… The ascendancy of either one spells life or death for the individual" (A.J. Levine).

One might add that it spells life or death for the society of which the individual forms a part. Apart from sociology there can be no coherent psychology, any more than one can comprehend the biology and behaviour of ants by reference to one individual. And apart from individual realisation and action history is only too often a catalogue of futility and folly which would turn the stomach of any masochist. The factual history of power in society bears the same relationship to communal health as the works of de Sade bear to individual normality, save that it is real, not fantastic.

Either it is true that humanity by intelligence and by the practice of mutual aid and direct action can reverse processes which appear socially inevitable, or humanity will become extinct by simple maladaptation… I believe it to be the duty of psychology and medicine, for which they are particularly suited, to initiate the process of sociological change by prescribing conscientious, intelligent and responsible disobedience and resistance by individuals towards irresponsible power-institutions such as war, military service, and other forms of coercion–not as a sub-intelligent revolt

political power, and manage and coordinate social changes from the heights of power. In the anarchist case government is treated as by nature obstructive and oppressive and non-creative, the revolution is carried out by economic expropriation and re-organization, by the formation of independent communal organizations, by creating a new way of life in education, criminology and the rest; the State does not "wither away," nor is it even "overthrown;" it dies on the spot.

In either case civil disobedience may play some role, and in the anarchist case it is civil disobedience–or to describe it more accurately, total ignoring–that abolishes government. But what is done about, and in relation to, government does not matter except for its effect on the total society.

A moment's reflection will show that the problem is not futuristic. If the socialist method of governmentalism is followed–as we hope not–then a forthright preparation, ideologically and tactically, should begin now. If the anarchist method, then the social revolution should begin now (how, we will speak of later). A movement which repudiates these questions can be a very valuable "troublemaker"–there is need for troublemakers–but not a "peacemaker."

One may make a very interesting parallel with "pure" syndicalism, which too attempted to be a thing sufficient in itself, neither socialist nor anarchist, and became a deadend except as it became an appendage of socialist parties or a rather confused associate of anarchism. There is another analogy which is even more striking, however. In the 19th century, gradually dying out since, there was in some quarters, including some anarchist ones, a retrospectively very naive faith in violence-in-itself–the magic of sporadic acts of violence culminating in barricades. (There was even a philosopher of permanent violence, Sorel.) Our "non-violent" friends have really turned this myth inside out–as though the shedding of blood was its unique miscalculation. If things were only so simple and violence alone to blame! But a revolution is a positive thing, it is

vastly more than either violence or non-violence. Civil disobedience can be a powerful propaganda of the deed, and a powerful specific weapon, but that is all it is.

Third Camp and Democratic Illusion

The inadequacy of civil disobedience is not remedied–quite the contrary–by resuscitating the ancient radical illusion of the defensive united front. In this case the united front–of the Third Camp–marches right up to the problem of social revolution, comes out four-square for a good society, and proceeds to establish its compromise character as a defensive, opposing, protesting movement. But these institutions and these wars do not vanish under a good loud protest.

Except as the political elements gain the upper hand, or as the pacifists draw anarchist conclusions, the Third Camp remains in the pacifist dilemma–which it has managed to make worse. What is valuable in Militant Pacifism, its emphasis on individual action, individual responsibility and initiative, emerges from compromise as the viewpoint of a faction, not to characterize the movement. Interest and energy is necessarily shifted then to a hypothetical mass movement–which has the misfortune not to exist, nor is the ground prepared for it, nor steps to prepare the ground taken.

But the hypothetical nature of the mass movement does not save the united front from the consequences of mass movements. In the day-by-day of a liberation movement also there is a socialist way and an anarchist way–the way of Democracy and the way of Freedom. Ipso facto the creation of a unified third pressure force makes the choice of Democracy and ignores a century of history.

A century of history! Of labor unions that became bureaucracies and dictatorships, of revolutionary political parties that became exactly the same thing on a more terrible scale. In America we have had a century and a half of experience in democracy, in every type of organization from government down to local union, lodge and

and ethical rule on which to base my ideas, it is that of human solidarity and mutual aid against a hostile environment, the psychical and moral counterpart of the biological forces of adaptation which lead to phylogenetic change. It is in terms of these forces that human individuals, and human societies, exist or succumb, and the sexual impulse, whether we regard it as the Eros of Freud or as a force of purely biochemical status (they are not mutually exclusive), is in itself so essential a manifestation of this species-solidarity, and of the attempt and will to survive, that its submergence or diversion is a danger-signal in any society. A society which orientates itself toward life and human solidarity is a civilisation–one which orientates itself exclusively towards death and allies itself with the purely anti-human status of non-existence, non-living, asociality, is barbarism. Every indication points to the steady movement of Western cultures away from the first, and towards the second.

Since I am concerned… mainly to discuss sexual ethics in a non-medical context, I have said less than I would wish about the reverse aspect of sexuality and psychology, the effect of individual maladaptations on the social pattern. Societies cannot manufacture new evils, though they can aggravate existing ones. After a certain point the process of social imbalance and private neurosis becomes a vicious circle–each generation reinforces the errors of the last, until new factors enter to alter the pattern. It is not easy for the physiologist to mould the Freudian Eros and Thanatos to his own rather different conception of instincts, but they exist at the physiological level, if only as facilitation-patterns, which higher cortical processes can take over and employ in the more complex patterns of social conduct–thus sadism is unquestionably in part an exaggeration of a component in normal mating-behaviour, but it is also a process which can be taken over and assimilated by aggressiveness, conditioned as a source of sexual pleasure by experience, and substituted for normal, sexuality by deprivation–the mind is somewhat like an instrument which can play innumerable tunes on a limited number of chords, and in which any note once struck

out these connections in the following excerpts from his 1948 Freedom Press pamphlet, *Barbarism and Sexual Freedom: Lectures on the sociology of sex from the standpoint of anarchism.*

Barbarism and Sexual Freedom

The importance of sexual normality in psychical and social health has been increasingly recognised by psychologists, both as cause and as effect, but like most other workers in medical fields they are inclined to regard sociology which speaks in terms of politics with suspicion–there is a tendency for psychological studies to induce a kind of medical fatalism which equates the revolutionary and the malcontent with the psychical invalid, and regards "adaptation" and "morale" as gods to be bowed down before. But to the sociologist at least "adaptation" is to be regarded in the light of the specific value of the environment to which the subject is adapted–"adaptation" to war, fascism or sterility, for example, is a form of acquiescence which cannot be regarded as a sign of health.

Nobody in medical practice who uses his faculties can fail to be aware that it is largely the social organisation and environment which today is "psychopathic," rather than its individual components, and if the idea that institutions can be regarded psychically as if they were individuals, or can behave like deranged individuals, is odd or heterodox to those who treat individuals, it is not new in sociology. The public conduct of individuals, from which social mechanisms are composed, is a world increasingly fenced-off from, though governed by the same processes as, personal psychology, and far as conceptions of the group unconscious have gone, they must go further still, assisted by theories derived not only from psychology but from history and zoology, and formulated by such social-biologists as Kropotkin.

I write as an anarchist, that is, as one who rejects the conception of power in society as a force which is both anti-social and unsound in terms of general biological principle. If I have any metaphysical

party. Still the illusion persists that the membership can control the centrally-directed activities of the organization by voting, going to meetings, etc. Almost any of these organizations, if it is more than a few months old, may be taken as a model of the devolution of democracy. It is a lesson each person can verify from his own experiences, and the first lesson for a 20th century radical to learn: that the coloration of every organization is determined ultimately by who makes the decisions, and very little by who votes for the decision-makers, or who votes to ratify their decisions in pre-fabricated conventions.

Unfortunately the anarchist appreciation of the problem of organization is not understood, and widely caricatured. Organization in itself is not evil: the evil is power, and the remedy for the evil of power is, not the half-step of Democracy, but the whole step of Freedom. "The cure for the ills of democracy is more democracy" is almost true: but the constitutional safeguards are circumvented, the otiose membership slumbers on, and nothing changes. To define the abstract word in the context, freedom means individual responsibility and initiative, group discussion and decisions, and delegation only of specific, especially mechanical, functions which cannot be done by individuals and face-to-face groups. The corollary of this principle is that an objective achievable only by a freedom-defeating centralizing organization should be abandoned until a new way is found.

As responsibility and initiative and strong primary groups become more common, more elaborate organization becomes possible: finally a free society. But we do not have such people to work with, we are not such people.

Who is to unify the pressure force of the united front? Who is to make the decisions? write the programs? coin the slogans? if not the leadership cadres who have handed down the line at every political conference and in every political movement of past and present–the anarchist, where anarchists have tried it, as much as any other. So that the choice is between making our revolutionary

politics an activity of individuals and face to face groups, joining together more widely for specific purposes; or the mobilization of a mass movement which will take on, even if unsuccessful, the organizational tone of the society-at-large.

In the second case the sincere radicals may find themselves, rather too late, in libertarian revolution against the government of the microcosmic society which was to be the instrument of liberation.

To follow the anarchist way means to give up a lot of romantic images of the masses and general strikes and revolutions. But it also means to create something that actually tends to achieve the same good ultimate goals, a non-romantic revolution. Anyone can see that people who become sheep when they have a shepherd are, without one, more likely to act like lost sheep than like inventive men. It is, however, in the movement of liberation, if anywhere, that the ethics and dynamics of the future society are given birth, and men and women can begin to realize their powers.

The Social Revolution

Standing on an extreme peak of idealism anarchists have all the tools for tearing everybody to pieces. And this is rightly irking, if the anarchists cannot go on or refuse to go on.

We can proceed with two statements: (1) The individual is powerful. (2) The future society does not yet exist, nor can it be imposed by force.

To take the second first. Anarchists and revolutionary socialists in the 19th century agreed that the future society already existed: that there was merely a class of rulers, owners and priests to clear out and disperse, the government to nullify–even Marxism theorized this– and the revolution was made. Revolutionists sought to stir people to resist and rise up, they strove to release the underlying, suppressed–but not in the psychological sense repressed–solidarity.

Private capitalism, condemned by history, only survives today thanks to the arms race on the one hand, and the comparative failure of State communism on the other. We cannot ideologically rout Big Business and its supposed "free enterprise", behind which lurks the rule of a handful of monopolies, and we cannot dispatch back to the prop room the nationalism and fascism which are ever ready to rise again from their ashes, unless we can in fact offer a hard and fast substitute for State pseudo-communism. As for the socialist countries (so-called), they will not emerge from their current impasse unless we help them, not to liquidate, but rather to rebuild their socialism from the foundations up.

Khrushchev finally came to grief for having dithered so long between past and future. For all their good intentions and essays in de-Stalinization or loosening state controls, the Gomulkas, Titos and Dubceks run the risk of standing still or slipping from the tightrope where they balance unsteadily, and, in the long run, risk ruination, unless they acquire the daring and far-sightedness that would enable them to identify the essential features of a libertarian socialism.

Alex Comfort (1920–2000)

In Volume Two of *Anarchism: A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas*, I included selections by the English author, anarchist and anti-militarist, Alex Comfort (1920–2000), including material from *Peace and Disobedience* (1946), *Art and Social Responsibility* (1946) and his classic critique of the criminology of power, *Authority and Delinquency in the Modern State* (1950). Comfort became famous in the 1970s for his gourmet sex guide, *The Joy of Sex*. Few of his readers realized that he was an anarchist who argued that sexual health and liberation could only be fully achieved through the creation of an anarchist society by individual and mass disobedience and resistance to existing power structures. Comfort more explicitly draws

the time when it was written, that it could operate efficiently only if directed from the bottom up and not from the top down, only if directions emanated from the lower echelons of production and were continually monitored by them–whereas in the USSR this supervision by the masses is startlingly absent. Without any doubt, the future belongs to autonomous management of undertakings by workers associations. What has yet to be clarified is the assuredly delicate mechanism by which these federate and the various interests are reconciled in an order which is free. In the light of which, the attempt by the Belgian Cesar de Paepe, who is today unjustly forgotten, to work out a modus vivendi between anarchism and statism, deserves to be exhumed.

Elsewhere, the very evolution of technology and of labour organization is opening up a route to socialism from below. The most recent research into the psychology of work has pointed to the conclusion that production is only truly "efficient" provided that it does not crush man and that it works with him instead of alienating him, and relies upon his initiative and whole-hearted co-operation, turning his toil from obligation into joy, something which cannot be fully achieved either in the industrial barracks of private capitalism or those of State capitalism. Moreover, the acceleration of transport is a singular boon to the operation of a direct democracy. To take but one example: thanks to the aeroplane, in a few hours the delegates from local branches of the most modern of the American labour unions (let us say, the automobile workers' union) can readily be brought together.

But if we wish to regenerate a socialism which has been stood on its head by the authoritarians, and get it the right way up again, we have to act quickly. Back in 1896, Kropotkin was forcefully stressing that as long as socialism presented an authoritarian and statist face, it would inspire a measure of distrust in the workers and would, as a result, find its efforts compromised and its further development frustrated.

Now, the case is, the masses are fragmented, desolidarized; government intervention, political and economic bureaucracy are deeply implicated in every-day life, they make the wars and the animating economic policies; primary community, the old underlying health, is gone, the instincts of cooperation are barely visible. The future society does not yet exist–and how this new fact is met is crucial.

The revolutionary socialists attempt to meet the new situation by imposing the future society through manipulative vanguardist movements. Whatever their theorizing about party dictatorship, they create variations on the single theme of the Bolshevik Revolution, not the Paris Commune or 1848. (We are not referring to those conservative socialists who simply want to extend the "socializing" tendencies of capitalism, by Laborism.)

But if 19th century socialism, by insisting on retaining the State for a certain time, thereby automatically hindered revolutionary creativity, the modern revolution-by-the-State, while full of "criticisms" of 1917, threatens to multiply the power and menace of the State. The existing Society is no longer the friend of the revolution, it is the body upon which the revolutionary State is to perform its surgery.

State-violence, however rationalized, cannot cure the disease of the society; a timid governmentalism cannot change the society, and a bold one is the equivalent of Bolshevism. The revolution–this is the negative lesson–absolutely must be able to abolish government, the institution can be regarded with no tolerance, the institution has too dangerous a role to permit equivocation.

But if the future society does not exist–and if government cannot legislate it–the social revolution must begin now, we must begin creating the conditions of liberty. This social revolution consists in present acts of liberation, present release and revival of vitality, which can begin–today we can barely begin!–to prepare our society for revolution.

It is fortunate that the individual is powerful!

The social revolution must begin now. Hardly a phrase is more facile, an idea harder to express concretely, an idea harder to implement, or an area of action more essential to a revolutionary program.

Let us spell out areas for action (the instances are not meant to be exhaustive):

Economics. The creation of direct solidarity in the workingplace–which means recognition that the present labor movement is exactly not sociality-in-action; it means the practice of mutual aid and equality. The creation of workers' cooperatives. The rejection of debasing work–and of its products. The revival of the instinct of workmanship, of craftsmanship and quality.

Politics. The association of libertarians in close face-to-face groups, warm communities of free men, who demonstrate freedom and are strengthened by it.

Community. The creation of small communities–particularly of communities which do not isolate themselves from the world and draw the surrounding area into some part of their way of life.

Education. The creation of small schools and colleges which educate for individuality, thought, creative activity. Or the vital activity of a single teacher who puts into the conventional school what was not intended to be there. Or even more radical experiments within a libertarian community.

Family. The practice of freedom and responsibility between man and woman, the exclusion of law and conventional morality from the private relations of people; and the affording to children of the right and possibility of individuality and a creative relationship to their environment.

Arts and Sciences. The revival of sincerity in art, and the abandonment of standards of commercialism and success. The refusal of scientists to work within the framework of government and corporation sponsorship–not to mention the war-contributing projects!–and the search for new ways to carry on their work.

chinery of oppression even more refined than its predecessor, and to pass this off fraudulently as the "dictatorship of the proletariat", and, in many instances, absorbing into the new system "expertise" from the late regime (and still imbued with the old Fuhrerprinzip) leads gradually to the emergence of a new privileged class that tends to regard its own survival as an end in itself and to perpetuate the State which assures that survival–such is the model it now behooves us not to imitate. Moreover, if we take literally the Marxist theory of the "withering away" of the State, those material circumstances which had given rise to and (according to Marxists) legitimized the reconstruction of a state apparatus ought to allow us today increasingly to dispense with the state, which is a meddlesome gendarme greedy for survival.

Industrialization is proceeding by leaps and bounds the world over, albeit at different rates in different countries. The discovery of new, inexhaustible sources of energy is accelerating this process prodigiously. The totalitarian state engendered by poverty and deriving its justification from that is growing daily a little more superfluous. As far as the management of the economy goes, all experience, both in quintessentially capitalist countries like the United States and in the countries in thrall to "State communism", demonstrates that, as far as broad segments of the economy at least are concerned, the future no longer lies with giant production units. The gigantism that once bedazzled both the late Yankee captains of industry and the communist Lenin is now a thing of the past: Too Big is the title of an American study of the damage which this blight has done to the US economy. For his part, Khrushchev, wily old boor, eventually realized, albeit belatedly and falteringly, the need for industrial decentralization. For a long time it was believed that the sacrosanct imperatives of planning required State management of the economy. Today we can see that planning from above, bureaucratic planning, is a frightful source of disorder and waste and that, as Merleau-Ponty says, "plan it does not." Charles Bettelheim has shown us, in a book which was unduly conformist at

ject to so-called State "communism", they have made a prodigious leap forward. They are a lot less easy to dupe. They know the extent of their rights. Their grasp of the world and of their own fate has increased considerably. While the deficiencies of the French proletariat before 1840, in terms of its lack of experience and its numerical slightness, gave rise to Blanquism, those of the pre-1917 Russian proletariat to Leninism, and those of the new proletariat exhausted and in disarray after the civil war of 1918–1920, or recently uprooted from the countryside, engendered Stalinism, today the toiling masses have much less need to vest their powers in authoritarian and supposedly infallible tutors.

Then again, thanks especially to Rosa Luxemburg, socialist thinking has been penetrated by the idea that even if the masses are not yet quite ripe, and even if the fusion of science and the working class envisioned by Lassalle has not yet been fully realized, the only way to combat this backwardness and remedy this shortcoming is to help the masses educate themselves in direct democracy directed from the bottom up: to imbue them with a feeling for their responsibilities–instead of maintaining in them, as State communism does (whether it be in power or in opposition), the age-old habits of passivity, submission and the inferiority complex bequeathed to them by a past of oppression. Even though such an apprenticeship may sometimes prove labourious, even if the rate of progress is sometimes slow, even if it puts additional strain upon society, even if it can only proceed at the cost of a degree of "disorder", these difficulties, these delays, these added strains, these growing pains are infinitely less harmful than the phoney order, phoney dynamism, phoney "efficiency" of State communism, which reduces man to a cipher, murders popular initiative and ultimately brings the very idea of socialism into disrepute.

As far as the problem of the State goes, the lesson of the Russian revolution is written on the wall for all to see. To eradicate the masses' power right after the success of the revolution, as was done, rebuilding on the ruins of the old state machinery a new ma-

Within this same framework we can begin to imagine both the character of a general social transformation, and the vital areas we can work in today. The truth is that very few people are doing so. But it is also the truth that very few radicals and revolutionists have understood the anarchist idea of social change, and still we watch the energy poured into politicalizing movements.

Underlying what precedes is the assumption, the individual is powerful. We are comparing him with the mass. We must state what we mean, since any fool can see that the individual is weak and powerless.

The individual is powerful when he is free, and more powerful when he is not alone; but he is weak when he is in a mass.

Without the idea of the free man, the anarchist idea falls to the ground: because the future society cannot exist, or its beginnings be nurtured, without him. This is the man who thinks, who acts for himself, who is responsible for his actions, who initiates and invents. He alone has the potential of cooperation, of community. He is not "created" by a demagogic propaganda, he does not act by immediate "interest." He lives today as if he were in a sensible society–as far as one can– and in acting for the social good he does not fail to act to realize himself.

Without the idea of the free man, the anarchist idea fails. But also it is an idea peculiar to anarchism: for man is not viewed as a unit in an army wheeled to action against the ramparts of capitalism. Nor is he viewed as a man who spends his time disobeying and resisting the State. Where does this leave the work of "opposing the war" and "opposing the repression"? the acts of civil disobedience? Is it to be supposed that these men cannot get together to stage a public protest? If they cannot, maybe there is something wrong with the particular action? Is it to be supposed that such a man will sign a loyalty oath? Or that he will be an informer? (though he may choose to keep his address to himself, though he may choose to resist the war in his own way, though he may imagine that there

is a time for "staying out from under the wheels," and another for not budging in his tracks, all on his own terms).

In times as reactionary as ours, a program of action, and especially goals for action, are in a fantastic disproportion to the doings of busy History, when it is raining a terrible fire on the Pacific Ocean, and a small stupidity in Washington or Moscow or Tehran might conceivably leave our earth in ruins. It is necessary to notice this disproportion, but neither to be reduced by it to apathy, or seduced by it into the "crackpot realism." It is necessary to go quietly ahead.

Daniel Guerin (1904–1988)

Daniel Guerin (1904–1988) was a French libertarian communist who helped spark renewed interest in anarchism in the 1960s, first through his book, *Anarchism: From Theory to Practice* (1965), and then through his anthology of anarchist writings, *Neither God Nor Master* (1969; English translation published in 1998 by AK Press under the title, *No Gods No Masters*). I included excerpts from his 1965 essay, "Twin Brothers, Enemy Brothers," in which Guerin discusses the continuing relevance of anarchism, in Volume Two of *Anarchism: A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas*, together with a selection of his writings on homosexuality and social revolution (Selections 49 & 76), and Noam Chomsky's Introduction to the 1970 English edition of Anarchism: From Theory to Practice. The following excerpts, translated by Paul Sharkey, are from Guerin's 1958 essay, "Three Problems of the Revolution," reprinted in his collection of essays, In Search of a Libertarian Communism (Paris: Cahiers Mensuels Spartacus, 1984).

Three Problems of the Revolution

Voline, libertarian chronicler of the Russian revolution, after having been an actor in and an eye-witness to it, writes:

that, as Voline emphatically underscores, it is the authoritarian idea which, far from belonging to the future, is merely a hangover from the old, worn-out, moribund bourgeois world. If there is a utopia involved here, it is in fact the utopia of so-called State "communism", the failure of which is so patently obvious that its own beneficiaries (concerned above all else with salvaging their interests as a privileged caste) are presently busily and blindly on the look out for some means to amend and break free from it.

The future belongs neither to classical capitalism, nor, despite what the late Merleau-Ponty would have had us believe, to a capitalism overhauled and corrected by "neo-liberalism" or by social democratic reformism. The failure of both of those is every whit as resounding as that of State communism. The future belongs still, and more than ever, to socialism, and libertarian socialism at that. As Kropotkin prophetically announced in 1896, our age "will bear the imprint of the awakening of libertarian ideas… The next revolution is not going to be the Jacobin revolution anymore".

The three fundamental problems of revolution which we sketched earlier should and can be resolved at last. No more the dithering and groping of 19th century socialist thinking. The problems are now not posed in abstract terms, but in concrete ones. Today we can call upon an ample crop of practical experiences. The technique of revolution has been enriched beyond measure. The libertarian idea is no longer etched on the clouds but derives from the facts themselves, from the (even when repressed) deepest and most authentic aspirations of the popular masses.

The problem of spontaneity and consciousness is much more easily resolved today than a century ago. The masses, though they are, as a consequence of the very oppression under which burden they are bent, somewhat out of touch as far as the bankruptcy of the capitalist system is concerned, and still lacking in education and political clear-sightedness, have regained much of the ground by which they lagged historically. Throughout the advanced capitalist countries, as well as in the developing countries and those sub-

himself as being neither communist, nor mutualist, nor collectivist. Production had to be run at one and the same time locally, through a "solidarization of communes", and in trade terms by the workers' companies (or associations). Under the Bakuninists' influence, the Basle congress of the First International in 1869 decided that in the society of the future, "government will be replaced by the councils of the trades bodies". Marx and Engels shuttled and hovered between the two extremes. In the 1848 Communist Manifesto inspired by Louis Blanc, they had opted for the all too convenient pan-Statist solution. But later, under the influence of the 1871 Paris Commune and pressure from the anarchists, they were to temper this statism and spoke of the "self-government of producers". But such libertarian nuances were short-lived. Almost immediately, in the struggle to the death which they waged against Bakunin and his disciples, they reverted to a more authoritarian and statist vocabulary.

So it was not entirely without reason (although not always in complete good faith either) that Bakunin charged the Marxists with dreaming of concentrating the whole of industrial and agricultural production in the hands of the State. In Lenin's case, statist and authoritarian trends, overriding an anarchism which they contradicted and extinguished, were present in germ, and under Stalin, as "quantity" became "quality", they degenerated into an oppressive State capitalism which Bakunin appears to have anticipated in his occasionally unfair criticisms of Marx.

This brief historical review is of no interest other than the extent to which it can help us to find our bearings in the present. The lessons we draw from it make us understand, startlingly and dramatically, that, despite many notions which today appear archaic and infantile and which experience has refuted (their "apoliticism", say), the libertarians were in essence more correct than the authoritarians. The latter showered insults upon the former, dismissing their program as a "collection of ideas from beyond the grave", or as reactionary, obsolete, moribund utopias. But today it turns out

"We have been bequeathed a fundamental problem by preceding revolutions: I am thinking of the one in 1789 and the one in 1917 especially: largely mounted against oppression, animated by a mighty breath of freedom and proclaiming freedom as their essential objective, how come these revolutions slid into a new dictatorship wielded by other ruling, privileged strata, into fresh slavery for the popular masses? What might the conditions be that would enable a revolution to avoid that dismal fate? Might that fate be due to ephemeral factors and even quite simply to mistakes and shortcomings which might from now on be averted? And in the latter case, what might the means be of eradicating the danger threatening revolutions yet to come?"

Like Voline, I think that the two great historical experiences of the French revolution and the Russian revolution are indissolubly linked. Despite the time differences, the differences in their contexts, and their differing "class content", the issues they raise and the pitfalls they encountered are essentially the same. At best the first revolution displays them in a more embryonic state than the second. Also, men today cannot hope to discover the path leading to their definitive emancipation unless they can distinguish in these two experiences what was progress and what was backsliding, so that they can draw lessons for the future.

The essential cause of the relative failure of history's two greatest revolutions does not reside, as I see it, to borrow Voline's words, either in "historical inevitability" nor in mere subjective "errors" by the revolutionary protagonists. The Revolution carries within itself a grave contradiction (a contradiction which, happily, let it be said again, is not beyond remedy and lessens with the passage of time): it can only arise and it can only win if it springs from the depths of the popular masses and their irresistible spontaneous uprising.

But, though class instinct impels them to break their chains, the masses of the people lack education and consciousness. And as they surge with redoubtable energy, but clumsily and blindly, towards freedom, bumping into privileged, astute, expert, organized

and experienced social classes, they can only triumph over the resistance they encounter if they successfully acquire, in the heat of battle, the consciousness, expertise, organization and experience in which they are deficient. But the very act of forging the weapons just listed, which are the only ones that can ensure that they get the better of their adversary, carries with it an enormous danger: that it might kill the spontaneity which is the heart of the revolution, that it might compromise freedom inside the organization, or allow the movement to be taken over by a minority elite of more expert, more aware, more experienced militants who, to start with put themselves forward as guides, only to end up imposing themselves as leaders and subjecting the masses to some new form of man's exploitation of his fellow men.

Ever since socialism ever considered this problem and ever since it clearly perceived this contradiction, which is to say, since, roughly, the mid-19th century, it has not ceased weighing up the odds and hovering between the two extreme poles of freedom and order. Every one of its thinkers and actors has striven labouriously and tentatively, amid all sorts of hesitation and contradictions, to resolve this fundamental dilemma of the Revolution.

In his celebrated Memoir on Property (1840), Proudhon figured that he had worked out a synthesis when he optimistically wrote: "The highest perfection of society lies in the union of order with anarchy". But a quarter of a century later, he noted glumly: "These two ideas, freedom… and order, are back to back… They cannot be separated, nor can the one absorb the other: we must resign ourselves to living with them both and striking a balance between them… No political force has yet come up with a true solution in the reconciling of freedom and order."

Today a vast empire built under the aegis of "socialism" is seeking tiresomely and empirically and sometimes convulsively to escape from the iron yoke of an "order" founded upon constraint and rediscover the road to the freedom to which its millions of subjects, growing coarser and more alive to the fact, aspire.

nance. "State capitalism" is to survive the social revolution. The bureaucracy, already enormous under Napoleon, the king of Prussia or the Tsar, will, under socialism, no longer make do with collecting taxes, raising armies and increasing its police: its tentacles will now extend into the factories, the mines, the banks and the means of transportation. Libertarians shrieked with horror. This extravagant extension of the State's powers struck them as the death knell for socialism. Max Stirner was one of the first to rebel against the statism of communist society. Not that Proudhon was any less vocal, and Bakunin followed suit: "I despise communism", he declared in one speech, "because it necessarily results in the centralization of ownership in State hands, whereas I… want to see society organized and property held collectively or socially from the bottom up, through free association, and not from the top down through any sort of authority."

But the anti-authoritarians were not unanimous in formulating their counter-proposals. Stirner suggested a "free association" of "egoists", which was too philosophical in its formulation and too unstable as well. The more down to earth Proudhon suggested a somewhat backward-looking petit bourgeois combination appropriate to the outmoded-stage of small industry, petty commerce and artisan production: private-ownership would be safeguarded; the small producers, retaining their independence, would favour mutual aid; at best he would agree to collective ownership in a number of sectors, regarding which he conceded that large-scale industry had already taken them over: transport, mining, etc. But Stirner like Proudhon, each after his fashion, was leaving himself wide open to the sound birching which Marxism was about to inflict upon them, albeit somewhat unfairly.

Bakunin made a point of parting company from Proudhon. For a time, he made common cause with Marx inside the First International against his mentor. He repudiated post- Proudhonian individualism and took notice of the consequences of industrialization. He whole-heartedly advocated collective ownership. He presented

Marx and Engels sought a path between these two extremes. Jacobinism had left its mark on them, but contact with Proudhon around 1844 on the one hand, and the influence of Moses Hess on the other, the critique of Hegelianism, the discovery of "alienation" had left them a touch more libertarian. They repudiated the authoritarian statism of the Frenchman Louis Blanc and that of the German Lassalle, declaring their support for the abolition of the State. But in good time. The State, that "governmental hotchpotch", is to endure after the Revolution, but for a time only. As soon as the material conditions making it dispensable have been achieved, it is to "wither away". And, in the interim, steps must be taken to "lessen its more vexatious effects as much as possible". This short term prospect rightly worries libertarians. Survival of the State, even "temporary" survival, has no validity in their eyes and they prophetically announced that, once reinstalled, this Leviathan will doggedly refuse to go quietly. The libertarians' unremitting criticism left Marx and Engels in a bit of a pickle and they eventually made such concessions to these dissenters that at one point the quarrel among socialists over the State seemed to hinge upon nothing more and indeed to amount to nothing more than quibbling over words. This blithe agreement lasted no longer than a morning.

But 20th century Bolshevism revealed that it was not simply a matter of semantics. Marx's and Engels's transitional State, became, in embryo under Lenin and much more under Lenin's posterity, a many-headed hydra bluntly refusing to wither away.

3. Management of the economy

Finally, what form of ownership is to take the place of private capitalism?

The authoritarians have a ready answer to that. As their chief shortcoming is a lack of imagination and as they have a fear of the unknown, they rely upon forms of administration and management borrowed from the past. The State is to throw its huge net around the whole of production, all of exchange, and all of fi-

The problem thus remains posed acutely, and we have not yet heard the last of it.

If we examine it more closely, this problem boasts three relatively distinct but closely connected facets:

1. In the period of revolutionary struggle, what should the proper ratio be between spontaneity and consciousness, between the masses and the leadership?

2. Once the old oppressive regime has been overthrown, what form of political or administrative organization should replace the one overthrown?

3. Finally, by whom and how should the economy be administered following the abolition of private property (a problem posed in full measure as far as the proletarian organization is concerned but which the French revolution faced only in embryonic form)?

On each of these counts, the 19th century socialists hesitated and dithered, contradicted one another and clashed with one another. What socialists?

Broadly, we can identify three main currents among them:

a. the ones whom I would term the authoritarians, the statists, the centralists, the heirs–some of them to the Jacobin and Blanquist tradition of the French revolution–and others to the German (or, to be more precise, Prussian) tradition of military discipline and the State with a capital 'S'.

b. the ones I would term the anti-authoritarians, the libertarians, heirs, on the one hand, to the direct democracy of 1793 and the communalist, federalist idea: and, on the other, to Saint-Simonian apoliticalism aiming to replace political governance with the "administration of things".

c. finally, the so-called scientific socialists (Marx and Engels), striving labouriously and not always successfully or in a coherent way, and often for merely tactical reasons (for they had to make concessions to the authoritarian and libertarian wings of the workers movement alike), to reconcile the two afore-mentioned currents

and come up with some compromise between the authoritarian idea and the libertarian one.

Let us attempt to summarize briefly the attempts made by these three currents of socialist thinking to resolve the three fundamental problems of the Revolution.

1. Spontaneity and consciousness

Authoritarians have no confidence in the masses' ability to attain consciousness unaided, and, even when they claim otherwise, they have a panic-stricken terror of the masses. If they are to be credited, the masses are still brutalized by centuries of oppression. They are in need of guidance and direction. A tiny elite of leaders has to stand in for them, teach them a revolutionary strategy and lead them to victory. Libertarians, on the other hand, contend that the Revolution has to be the doing of the masses themselves, of their spontaneity and free initiative, their creative potential, as unsuspected as it is formidable. They caution against leaders who, in the name of higher consciousness, seek to overrule the masses so as to deny them the fruits of their victory later on.

As for Marx and Engels, sometimes they place the accent on spontaneity and sometimes on consciousness. But their synthesis remains lame, unsure, contradictory. Moreover it ought to be pointed out that the libertarians too were not always free of the same afflictions. In Proudhon, alongside an optimistic paean to the "political capacity of the working classes", one can find pessimistic strains casting doubt upon that capacity and lining up with the authoritarians in their suggestion that the masses ought to be directed from above. Likewise, Bakunin never quite managed to shake off the "48er" conspiratorialism of his younger days and, right after he has honed in on the masses' irresistible primal instinct, we find him advocating covert "penetration" of the latter by conscious leaders organized in secret societies. Hence this queer criss-crossing: the people whom he berated, not without good grounds perhaps, for their authoritarianism catch him red-handed in an act of authoritarian Macchiavellianism.

The two competing tendencies within the First International took each other to task, each with good reason, for subterranean manoeuvres designed to capture control of the movement. As we shall see, we would have to wait for Rosa Luxemburg before a fairly viable modus vivendi between spontaneity and consciousness would be advanced. But Trotsky compromised this painstakingly struck equilibrium in order to take the contradiction to its extreme: in some respects he was "Luxemburgist": as his 1905 and History of the Russian Revolution particularly testify, he had a feel and an instinct for revolution from below: he placed the accent upon the autonomous action of the masses; but he comes around in the end–after having argued brilliantly against them–to Lenin's Blanquist notions of organization and, once in power, he came to behave in a manner even more authoritarian than his party leader. Finally, in the tough struggle from exile, he was to shelter behind a Lenin who had become unassailable in order to bring his indictment against Stalin: and this identification with Lenin was to deny him, until his dying day, the opportunity to give free rein to the Luxemburgist element within him.

2. The Problem of Power

Authoritarians maintain that the popular masses, under the direction of their leaders, must replace the bourgeois State with their own State decked out with the description "proletarian" and that in order to ensure the survival of the latter, they must take the coercive methods employed by the former (centralization, discipline, hierarchy, police) to their extremes. This prospect drew cries of fear and horror from libertarians–a century and more ago. What, they asked, was the use of a Revolution that would make do with replacing one apparatus of oppression with another? Implacable foes of the State, any form of State, they looked to the proletarian revolution for the utter and final abolition of statist constraints. They aimed to replace the old oppressive State with the free federation of combined communes, direct democracy from the ground up.