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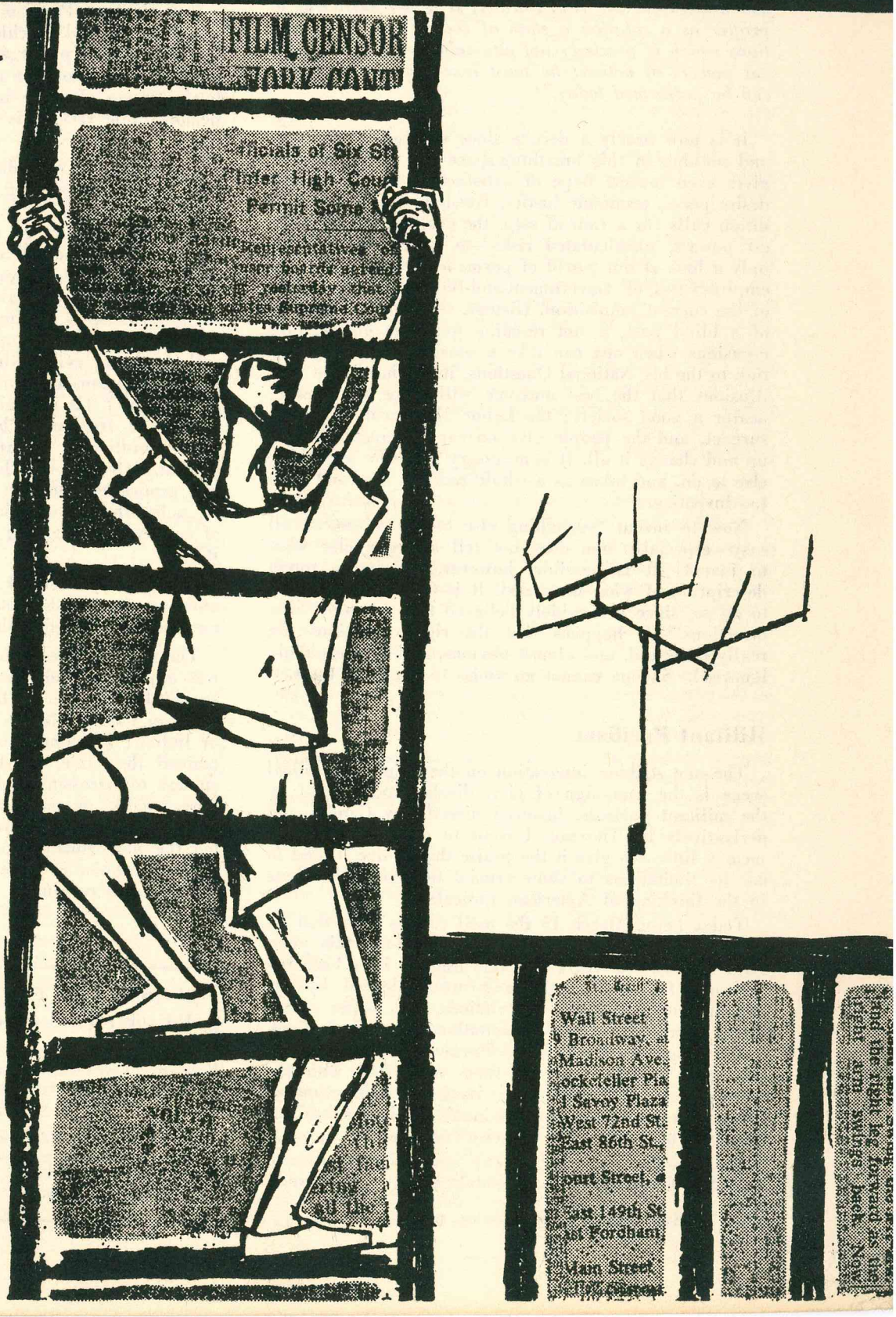

FROM POLITICS TO SOCIAL REVOLUTION

"Nothing is more disheartening than to see an honest party or press, unwilling to lend itself to bad alternatives, that does not constantly produce a stream of good natural solutions. If a man cannot in fact invent a way out, what right has such a man to be a libertarian on the issue at all? his negative criticism insults and disheartens the rest. Further, it is not sufficient to proffer as a solution a state of society and of institutions which is precisely not attainable by a man's present powers of action; he must invent an action which can be performed today."[1]

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, *un*calculated 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, 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 propaganda 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 commission 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 our 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.*

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[1] Paul Goodman, *Art and Social Nature*, page 39.

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 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 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 corrolary 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 *un*successful, 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.

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.[2] (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 working-place—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.

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.

[2] E. g., the declaration of the Libertarian Socialist Committee of Chicago against "seizure of power *by minorities*," or "placing of trust and authority in the hands of an *alleged* elite." (Emphasis ours.) The notion of solidarity is epitomized for the authors of "Our Perspective" by the favoring of "ethical restraints" in relations with other organizations.

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—so 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.

DAVID WIECK

Principles and Lessons of the Spanish Revolution

1

In juridical principle the Collectives were something entirely new. They were not syndicates, nor were they municipalities in any traditional sense; they did not even very closely resemble the municipalities of the Middle Ages. Of the two, however, they were closer to the communal than the syndicalist spirit. Often they might just as well have been called Communities, as for example the one in Binefar was. The Collective was an entity; within it, occupational and professional groups, public services, trade, and municipal functions were subordinate and dependent. In form of organization, in internal functioning, and in their specialized activities, however, they were autonomous.

2

The agrarian Collectives, despite their name, were to all intents and purposes libertarian communist organizations. They applied the rule "from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs." Where money was abolished, a certain quantity of goods was assured to each person; where money was retained, each family received a wage determined by the number of members. Though the technique varied, the moral principle and the practical results were the same.

3

In the agrarian Collectives solidarity was carried to extreme lengths. Not only was every person assured of the necessities, but the district federations increasingly adopted the principle of mutual aid on an inter-collective scale. For this purpose they created common reserves to help out villages less favored by nature. In Castille special institutions for this purpose were created. In industry this practice seems to have begun in Hospitalet, on the Catalan railroads, and was applied later in Alcoy. Had the political compromise not impeded open socialization, the practice of mutual aid would have been much more generalized.

4

A conquest of enormous importance was the right of women to livelihood, regardless of occupation or function. In about half of the agrarian Collectives, women received the same wages as men; in the rest women received less, apparently on the principle that they rarely lived alone.

5

The child's right to livelihood was also ungrudgingly recognized: not as State charity, but as a right no one dreamed of denying. The schools were open to children to the age of 14 or 15—the only guarantee that parents would not send their children to work sooner, and that education would be really universal.

6

In all the agrarian Collectives of Aragon, Catalonia, Levante, Castille, Andalusia and Estremadura, the workers formed groups to divide the labor or the land; usually they were assigned to definite areas. Delegates elected by the work-groups met with the Collective's delegate for agriculture to plan out the work. This typical organization arose quite spontaneously, by local initiative.

7

In addition to these meetings—and similar meetings of specialized groups—the Collective as a whole met in a weekly or bi-weekly or monthly Assembly. This too was a spontaneous innovation. The Assembly reviewed the activities of the councillors it named, and discussed special cases and unforeseen problems. All inhabitants—men and women, producers and non-producers—took part in the discussion and decisions. In many cases the "individualists" (non-Collective members) had equal rights in the Assembly.

8

In land cultivation the most significant advances were: the rapidly increasing use of machinery and irrigation; greater diversification; and forestation. In stock-raising: the selection and multiplication of breeds; the adaptation of breeds to local conditions; and large-scale construction of collective stock-barns.

9

Production and trade were brought into increasing harmony and distribution became more and more unified: first district unification, then regional unification, and finally the creation of a National Federation. The district (*comarca*) was the basis of trade. In exceptional cases an isolated Commune managed its own, on authority of the district Federation which kept an eye on the Commune and could intervene if its trading practices were harmful to the general economy. In Aragon the Federation of Collectives, founded in January, 1937, began to coordinate trade among the communes in the region, and to create a system of mutual aid. The tendency to unity became more distinct with adoption of a single "producer's card" and single "consumer's card" —which implied suppression of all money, local and national—by decision of the February, 1937, Congress. Coordination of trade with other regions, and abroad, improved steadily. When disparities in exchange, or exceptionally high prices, created surpluses, they were used by the Regional Federation to help the poorer Collectives. Solidarity thus extended beyond the district.

10

Industrial concentration—the elimination of small workshops and uneconomical factories—was a characteristic feature of collectivization both in the rural Communes and in the cities. Labor was rationalized on the basis of social need—in Alcoy's industries and in those of Hospitalet, in Barcelona's municipal transport and in the Aragon Collectives.

11

The first step toward socialization was frequently the dividing up of large estates (as in the Segorbe and Granollers districts and a number of Aragon villages). In certain other cases the first step was to force the municipalities to grant immediate reforms (municipalization of land-rent and of medicine in Elda, Benicarlo, Castillone, Alcaniz, Caspe, etc.).

12

Education advanced at an unprecedented pace. Most of the partly or wholly socialized Collectives and municipalities built at least one school. By 1938, for example, every Collective in the Levante Federation had its own school.

13

The number of Collectives increased steadily. The movement originated and progressed swiftly in Aragon, conquered part of Catalonia, then moved on to Levante and later Castille. According to reliable testimony the accomplishments in Castille may indeed have surpassed Levante and Aragon. Estremadura and the part of Andalusia not conquered immediately by the fascists—especially the province of Jaen—also had their Collectives. The character of the Collectives varied, of course, with local conditions.

14

We lack exact figures on the total number of Collectives in Spain. Based on the incomplete statistics of the Congress in Aragon in February, 1937, and on data gathered during my stay in this region, there were at least 400. In Levante in 1938 there were 500. To this the Collectives in other regions must be added. In my research I found only two Collectives which failed: Boltona and Ainsa, in Northern Aragon.

15

Sometimes the Collective was supplemented by other forms of socialization. After I left Carcagente, trade was socialized. In Alcoy consumers cooperatives arose to round out the syndicalist organization of production. There were other instances of the same kind.

16

The Collectives were not created single-handed by the libertarian movement. Although their juridical principles were strictly anarchist, a great many Collectives were created spontaneously by people remote from our movement ("libertarians" without being aware of it). Most of the Castille and Estremadura Collectives were organized by Catholic and Socialist peasants; in some cases of course they may have been inspired by the propaganda of isolated anarchist militants. Although their organization opposed the movement officially, many members of the Socialist UGT (*Union General de los Trabajadores*) entered or organized Collectives, as did Republicans who sincerely wanted to achieve liberty and justice.

17

Small land-owners were respected. Their inclusion in the consumer's card system and in the Collective trading, the resolutions taken in respect to them, all attest to this. There were just two restrictions: they could not have more land than they could cultivate, and they could not carry on private trade. Membership in the Collective was voluntary: the "individualists" joined only if and when they were persuaded of the advantages of working in common.

18

The chief obstacles to the Collectives were:

a) The existence of conservative strata, and parties and organizations representing them: Republicans of all factions, Socialists of Left and Right (Large Caballero and Prieto), Stalinist Communists, and often the POUMists. (Before their expulsion from the Catalonian government—*Generalidad*—the POUMists were not truly a revolutionary party. They became so when driven into opposition. Even in June, 1937, a manifesto distributed by the Aragon section of the POUM attacked the Collectives.) The UGT was the principal instrument of the various politicians.

b) The opposition of certain small landowners (Catalan and Pyrenees peasants).

c) The fear, even among some members of Collectives, that the government would destroy the organizations once the war was over. Many who were not really reactionary, and many small landowners who would otherwise have joined the Collectives, held back on this account.

d) The open attack on the Collectives: by which is not meant the obviously destructive acts of the Franco troops wherever they advanced. In Castille the attack on the Collectives was conducted, arms in hand, by Communist troops. In the Valencia region, there were battles in which even armored cars took part. In the Huesca province the Karl Marx brigade persecuted the Collectives. The Macia-Companys brigade did the same in Teruel province. (But both always fled from combat with the fascists. The Karl Marx brigade always remained inactive, while our troops fought for Huesca and other important points; the Marxist troops reserved themselves for the rearguard. The second gave up Vivel del Rio and other coal regions of Utrillos without a fight. These soldiers, who ran in panic before a small attack that other forces easily contained, were intrepid warriors against the unarmed peasants of the Collectives.)

19

In the work of creation, transformation and socialization, the peasant demonstrated a social conscience much superior to that of the city worker.

GASTON LEVAL

The Patriotic Revision of History

Part II The "New" Historiography

(Part I reviewed Allan Nevins' apology for capitalism, as ultimately responsible for America's survival through military supremacy. It was pointed out that (1) survival is a far from sufficient value, and its appearance is attributable to the current dominance of nationalist ideologies; (2) American capitalism has contributed heavily to the evolution of our world crisis, and this debars it from appealing to that crisis to justify itself; (3) the history of American capitalists, instead of justifying Nevins' encomiums, is an endlessly documented story of social waste and organized greed for wealth and power.)

At this point I do not see there is anything left of Nevins' declaration, except his strictures against Beard and the Beardians. And these allow us to bring this essay to its point.

Unlike the old anti-conservative historians, the "historians of the future," so Nevins tells us, will be without bias, submissive to the voice of the facts. Obviously Nevins is playing upon the current under-emphasis of economics; like any historian with a passion, Beard is open to attack for the blind spots in his schema. Our point is not to fall in with the game and defend Beard, but to see what Nevins is driving at.

From a technical point of view, what Nevins is asking for—as a novelty!—is a return to an error from which American history-writing is still only emerging. For an excellent discussion of "objectivism" we may turn to W. Stull Holt's article on "Historical Scholarship," in *American Scholarship in the Twentieth Century*:[1]

> To be scientific was to be objective. To be objective was to study critically the sources and to ascertain impartially the facts of history, as they actually happened ("wie es eigentlich gewesen"). This was to be done with the same detached mind and in the same manner in which, it was believed, natural scientists observed their phenomena. The objective facts, thus established by a completely neutral historian-scientist without benefit of generalization or any preconceptions, would speak for themselves. Nearly all of the scholarly history written in the United States in the late nineteenth and in the first half of the twentieth century was written under the influence of this basic assumption. (pp. 95-96)

[1] Merle Curti, editor; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953.

What exactly was the attack of Beard and others on objectivism? Well, they pointed out the assumptions of this scholarly school, and assumptions such as these need no more than exposure to the light of day to demolish them (again quoting Professor Holt):

> The critics insisted that the prevailing theory of objective scientific history was a theory and insisted on making explicit the assumptions implicit in it. The first assumption, they pointed out, is that the facts of history have existed as an object or series of objects outside the mind of the historian. The second is that the historian can know this object or series and can describe it as it objectively existed. This involves the question of documentation, the only way in which the historian can observe the facts. Yet documentation can only cover a small fraction of the events of history. This also requires the historian to divest himself of all philosophical, religious, political, economic, sexual, moral, and aesthetic interests so that he can view the facts with strict impartiality. It also presupposes that the facts can be grasped by a purely rational process. The final assumption is that the facts of history have some structural organization through inner or causal relations which any impartial historian can ascertain and on which all must agree. (pp. 96-97)

With regard to Nevins' complaint that Beard and such people were carried away by passion for their particular idea, we must observe that he has not cared to understand that history is only half a science, and the rest an art. The facts acquire meaning only as the human historian creates theories out of them. Like even the natural scientist, the good historian immerses himself in his material, usually because he is looking for something; he presents to himself as vividly as he can the lives and activities he is studying, until he begins to get "hunches" about what was really significant here. Then he is going to try to prove his "provocative theory:" if he does not have one, no one need bother to read him, and if he does not have a passion to prove it, he must not care, and if not he why anybody?

(The historian who has only the "artistic" spirit and lacks the drive to test his theories thoroughly is rightly reproached as "intuitive." But what shall we say of the man who is not intuitive enough to have an idea?)

Now, it is not the case that Nevins is—as he implies —coming along with a value-less unbiased approach to history, as we might know in general from the fact that appeals to "objectivity" usually signify a dissatisfaction with the *particular* facts that are getting all the attention, and as we know in particular from Nevins' implicit faith in the value of Survival by means of war.

Knowing what Nevins' bias is, we may know how impoverished a study of history based on it must be. For such work to be fruitful and enlightening, the health of the State would have to reflect closely the well-being of its citizens—else they will tell us much about high politics and diplomacy and high finance, from the point of view of their utility to the State, and nothing about social history, nothing of the lives and deaths of people.

On the pretense of purifying historiographical method, an emasculation of history is undertaken. So far as Acquisition is a more human-feeling activity than State diplomacy, one is led at last to some sympathy for the historians who wrote as though all human virtue were incarnate in the former.

Now it happens that Nevins' attack on history is not a completely isolated phenomenon, and has its counterpart, phrased somewhat more roughly, in the teaching of history in our school-systems. Without involving our-

selves too deeply in a story that is dreary when it is not frightening, it may be useful to point out the way history *ought* to be defended in the schools; so far have the "progressive educationists" lost themselves in struggling to hold onto trivial technical innovations against the powerful conservative attack, that it is well to mention basic principles once in a while.

We suggest a way of looking at history: as one of the great-circle routes by which we *create ourselves* into people with powers to confront, to be at the height of, the ethical choices in our lives. By history we try to gain a vivid image of what our ancestors were up to, the choices they faced, what these men of other times lived for and died for. By studying the bold interpretations of those lives and actions—what men thought then and since—and not from *learning* any one of them—we create our own image of Man, his life, his struggles; and of ourselves as human beings.

Self-evidently a certain way of teaching corresponds to this idea of the use of history. This way presents history as one of the studies of man, in which there are some facts, some ideas, no Truth. Its aim is to make the past vivid and living in as many facets as its students can be persuaded to perceive.

In short, history is to be studied rather than learned—for the sake of forming one's own visions, not mere "opinions," above all not for the sake of copying someone else's thought.

Now it has turned out that there is no place at all in our present schools for even the most diluted version of this idea. One should probably add—*especially because* most diluted, for it is not a kind of idea that lends itself to compromise; divorced from its spirit, its particular techniques merely add to the growing educational chaos, of schools in which there is neither learning *nor* study.

We may conclude with a pair of observations. First that this educational situation is a commentary on the social scientific theories that take the survival of the State as first principle: in fact, scrupulous attention to the needs of the State requires the maximumization of indoctrination, and extirpation of even the very modest efforts to humanize our education; unfortunately we could assemble an immensely long list of comparable ways in which the survival of the State demands the submergence of the grand human aspirations. Second—a converse of the first—that those who take education and the studies of man seriously, in a humanistic sense, might take a good look at the causes of their current defeat, and then a good hard look at their own allegiance to the State-idea.

HISTORICUS

"The Root is Man"

Part I: The Durable Polemic

A few months ago the Cunningham Press of California re-issued a group of Dwight Macdonald's essays from the now-and lamentably-defunct periodical, *Politics*. They were *The Responsibility of Peoples*, dealing with the attempts by war-time propagandists to fix on the German people the responsibility for the Nazi atrocities, and the series bearing the title of *The Root is Man*, in which Macdonald attempted a re-assessment of the radical position, away from old-style Marxist Progressivism and in the direction of a genuinely libertarian conception.[1]

To these essays Macdonald has added a number of notes and appendices which indicate, to some extent at least, the reasons why, in the seven years between 1946, when the second piece was written, and 1953, when this new edition was prepared, the author should have shifted his position from the pacifism he had reached at the end of the last war to the—admittedly very qualified—support of the Western camp in the present cold war situation. It was, I admit, principally in order to study these last items and to see what new light—or otherwise—had burst in upon a man whose ideas I have always respected, even in disagreement, that I began to read this new edition of essays I had not looked at since they first appeared.

In the process, I was agreeably surprised to find that what Macdonald had to say in his original script had maintained a durability unusual among polemical writings in our day. Much of his argument is still fresh and direct enough to provide material for reflections on the character of radical—and particularly anarchist—movements which have not yet been sufficiently elaborated. And therefore, since I believe that the author's subsequent change of front on some issues should not make us reject his past writings any more than Kropotkin's latter-day bellicosity should make us discount *Mutual Aid*, I have decided to presume so far on the good nature and space of the editors of *Resistance* as to make this a two-part review. In the first I shall deal with some aspects of the original text, and in the second I shall turn to the arguments which Macdonald brings forward against the pacifist position we once shared and which I still maintain.

The Responsibility of Peoples need not delay us for long, since it is a straightforward and well documented proof that there is no tenable reason to assume that the German people as a whole was responsible for—or even, for the most part, aware of—the atrocities of the death camps in which six million Jews were slaughtered during the latter half of the war. Macdonald shows that this was far less a genuinely popular phenomenon than the persecution of the Negroes in the South, and he also shows that the Allied attempt to make Germans as a whole responsible for what their rulers did was in fact an extension of the general totalitarian attempts, by the Nazis and later by the Communists, to complete their rule by establishing a general complicity in guilt—a complicity which would absolve their own tyranny by the sophism that where all are guilty, then none individually is guilty. In some respects Macdonald has over-emphasised his points, as when he suggests (he was writing in 1945) that the "Responsibility of the German People" propaganda and its practical application in strategic bombing would result in the prevalence of Nazism or its equivalent by some other name in Germany after the war. In fact, with all due disrespect for Adenauer and his old-style Conservatism, the totalitarian groups in Germany today wield only a shadow of their former power, and such events as the resistance movements of last summer in Eastern Germany show

[1] *The Root is Man: Two Essays in Politics*, by Dwight Macdonald. Cunningham Press, Alhambra, Calif.

that twenty years of continued totalitarian rule, twenty years of high-pressure conditioning, have not extirpated the germs of rebelliousness in the German people. This fact may suggest that the pessimistic attitude which people like Macdonald and Hannah Arendt tend to adopt, of regarding totalitarian regimes as internally durable and likely to crack only under external pressure, is not necessarily correct.

In *The Root is Man*, Macdonald explores the attitudes of the traditional Left, and particularly the Marxist Left, and diagnoses their inadequacy today. As seems to be inevitable in the present situation, his proposals for positive action are not spectacular; they consist principally of an advocacy of that tendency towards the decentralisation and simplification of life, and towards a personal rather than a mass approach, which for most of us seems to represent the limit of practical policy nowadays, and personally I can think of little to add, except perhaps a greater emphasis on the need to defend what liberties we have and to explore farther into the possibilities of resistance which the personal approach implies. We cannot *make* mass movements, we cannot *create* revolutionary situations where they do not exist; what we can do is to build upon the human potentiality which is implicit in Macdonald's phrase, *The Root is Man*, and to realise that even a single individual, given the right situation and a consciousness of his own will, can often achieve an enormous amount in the direction of positive achievement. There have been plenty of examples of this kind of one-man revolutionism, as Ammon Hennacy would call it, in our time, but it is an uncomfortably significant fact that few of them have been the work of anarchists, or even radicals in any conventional sense. Men like Albert Schweitzer, Michael Scott, Father Pierre of Paris, inspired by strong ethical feelings, have managed to tap those sources of human solidarity over which the Left once imagined it held a proprietory power, and it is perhaps high time we came to consider why they can strike water out of what seems to be an arid rock when we happen to strike it with our wands of dried-up theory and dessicated myth.

Macdonald does not tell us all the secret in *The Root is Man;* I think each of us has to find that according to his own situation and his own personality. But he does make a number of important criticisms of the kind of assumptions which still govern many minds in what is still rather belatedly called "the Left," and in this way he clears the air for individual exploration and, by implication, for at least a better approach to individual action.

Macdonald's basis is a criticism of that idea of Progress as an inevitable process which dominated the whole of the Left for most of the nineteenth century, and which has led to the concentration of political theory on an abstract view of history, of society and of the masses instead of on a concrete view of things as they are, without the framework of a political mythology. He declares that Free Will, or at least the element of choice, cannot be eliminated as a factor in social development, that History as a thing in itself is at least a doubtful entity, and that, far from a dialectical progressive pattern existing in history, there are always a number of possible alternatives at any given point in time. Personally, I think this is a more realistic view of history than the progressivist one which Kropotkin and Proudhon, as well as Marx and Fourier, held in the past. Also, I think it opens the field wide for personal action, since we do not live in a world of inevitabilities, and for this reason I think it is more compatible with an anarchist attitude.

Two important corollaries of Macdonald's view are: (a) That the achievements of science are not necessarily good *per se*, that scientific method has a narrower scope of application than is generally assumed, that "it is an open question whether the increase of man's mastery over nature is good or bad in its actual effects on human life to date" and that we should "favour adjusting technology to man, even if it means—as may be the case—a technological regression, rather than adjusting man to technology. (b) The Progressive thinks in collective terms (the interests of Society or the Working-class); the Radical stresses the individual conscience and sensibility."

In an age of the atom bomb and other refinements of applied science, when the technique of the cushy life (in the sense of more cars, washing machines, television sets, etc.) is clearly not making men any more happy or wise or loving than the Mexican Indian with his almost neolithic standards of technology, it has become self-evident that scientific progress is not the great key to the future which our predecessors, the classic anarchist thinkers, considered it. Scientific materialism is an arid path to fulfilment, and Macdonald rightly demands a return to what he calls "those non-historical values (truth, justice, love, etc.) which Marx has made unfashionable among socialists."

The second point is an important one of which it seems to me that anarchists are still not sufficiently conscious. It is true that if you read through libertarian periodicals—at least those in the English language—you will find much less of the old mass-and-class cant than appeared say ten years ago. But the collectivist viewpoint still exists in the form of a mythology that looks towards "the masses" and "the working class" as the saviours of society. I myself have subscribed to absurdities of this kind in the past. But, in fact, how can such abstractions save society or do anything else? *The masses* are a politician's fancy, *the working class* is a convenient term of classification for sociologists, but both of these portentous entities are in fact quite unreal. A crowd may have a kind of corporate and concrete existence, it may achieve things which individuals would be afraid to attempt on their own, and it may commit atrocities which they would be ashamed to perpetrate singly. But a *mass* or a *class* is really a totalitarian way of looking at a collection of human individuals who may have certain interests and feelings in common, but who are basically individuals and must be approached as such. I believe that even on the low level of propaganda the talk about masses and classes is incredibly foolish, for nowadays people are getting sick of being regarded as ants in a heap, and the only way to approach them that is left is to stir their consciousness of themselves as individuals. Society does not consist of masses; in so far as it exists at all, it is a dynamic plurality of direct relationships, and it is on this basis that we should approach the problem of social change, rather than encouraging people to view themselves in that collective way which plays into the hands of the totalitarian politician. To Hell with masses and classes! Let's think of human beings for a change.

A final point of Macdonald's which I think should be considered more closely than anarchists are in the habit of doing is that of the non-relativism of certain ethical

concepts. This, I think, lies at the obscure core of anarchist beliefs, and has inspired the central consistency which, despite many waverings and weavings, has preserved a certain continuity in anarchist tradition from Godwin to our own day. But it is not enough to reject government. There are certain forms of activity which are just as power-ridden and corrupting, and to my mind violence—at least deliberate and considered violence—is one of these. I feel that many of us have been too conscious of our loyalty to the "movement" to speak out strongly enough about this in the past. But are we really willing to continue condoning and finding excuses for the cold-blooded assassinations of Ravachol and Emile Henri, or for the "executions" on a large scale which were carried out by anarchists in the Ukraine? I am not, and I think it is time that such ghosts, which come back from the past as allies of our critics, should be finally exorcised by a thorough consideration of the question. On points like this, and some of the others I have mentioned, I must confess that I find myself in closer agreement with non-anarchist radicals like D. S. Savage and Schweitzer than I do with many who use the name of anarchist.

However, before I get too far away from *The Root is Man*, I will end this review, and return later to what seem to me the inconsistencies of Macdonald's present position.

(*To be continued*)

GEORGE WOODCOCK

Books

The Expanding Environment

By E. A. Gutkind. Freedom Press, London. 8s 6d.

Gutkind's mind works quite a lot like Kropotkin's. It is lucid, logical and has the same tendency to dismiss obnoxious institutions on the ground that they originated out of youthful errors of the race, and are now historically obsolete. He has the same rather breathtaking optimism about the future. In presenting the historical background for existing institutions, and in demonstrating their present futility and bankruptcy, he is clear, reasonable and extremely well-informed; his proposed new society is well-integrated and convincing. One puts down the book with a feeling of elation: Gutkind's logic is so persuasive, his plan for the future is so obviously superior to the existing world, surely everything must happen the way he says. But then one reflects that in the 60 odd years since "Fields, Factories, and Workshops," a book that, if anything, is even more lucid, logical and irrefutable, the world has paid precious little attention to its magic formulae, to put it mildly.

Gutkind's central thesis is that the modern city has outlived any conceivable function, and that it must give way to a new organic regionalism, with a dispersed population, which is at the same time closely integrated, culturally vital and without any form of centralized authority. He gives a short, but comprehensive account of the origin and development of the city, from its earliest beginnings in Sumer, through Egypt, Greece, Rome, China, India and Europe, with special emphasis on the reasons why cities came into existence. He conclusively demonstrates that none of these reasons necessitates the continued existence of cities today: some of them have completely vanished, and the others can be more satisfactorily fulfilled in non-urban surroundings. The city has become a barrier to future progress. In its day it served the valuable purpose of concentrating population and thereby permitting the rapid exchange and development of cultural ideas; nowadays, with modern means of transport and communication, a dispersed population need have no difficulty in keeping in touch with one another and keeping abreast of the latest developments. The city, moreover, has grown in size and complexity beyond any possibility of sustaining human life tolerably. One by one, Gutkind examines all the various schemes for urban reform and shows that they are hopelessly inadequate. He maintains that the only hope lies in a complete revolution in the environment which integrates the best features of urban and rural life. This would result in a new phase of enlightenment, a higher standard of living, a falling birth rate, and the reduction of the external frictions which lead to war.

This is a stimulating, if not entirely original program, and one with which no anarchist can seriously quarrel. One looks in vain, however, for any method to implement the program. Gutkind belongs to the school which feels that it is enough to point out the evil and suggest a solution. He leaves it to the maturing intellect of the human race to find ways of achieving the solution.

I have no desire to disparage this approach—I have made use of it myself on numerous occasions. But it now seems to me that something more is needed besides an analysis of the existing evil and a general program to correct it. It is beginning to look as though the intellect of man is not maturing rapidly enough, if at all, and some way has got to be found to bring people—the immature, frustrated, corrupted people that inhabit the world today—to accept the need for fundamental social change and act on it. Perhaps this sort of thing can't be accomplished by books; perhaps only events can teach it. But until there is a growing movement that is convinced that the existing system must be scrapped, and rebuilt on new foundations, and is prepared to act resolutely to achieve this end, I'm afraid that books like this, admirable as they are, can do no more than provide a mild encouragement to the handful of convinced radicals.

HOLLEY CANTINE

The Political Philosophy of Bakunin: Scientific Anarchism

Compiled and Edited by G. P. Maximoff.
The Free Press, Glencoe, Ill. $6.00

This is an attempt to give in a logical sequence Bakunin's philosophy, sociology, and politics. The excerpting and stitching together are skillful and honest; this is without doubt the essence of Bakunin's theory as a theory, and difficulties and bad guesses are not deleted. (E. g. "One can now say with a certain degree of confidence that no nation in Western Europe will let itself be swept away by some religious impostor or political trickster.") The translation seems adequate, though perhaps not so spirited as the author wrote. There is a lively biographical sketch by Max Nettlau. The book fulfills its purpose and is useful, and there is nothing comparable in English.

It is not a very interesting theory, yet Bakunin was a passionately interesting man, a figure for the novelists. Where he is most interesting in this book, in the last part on "Tactics" (against the "Jacobins" of 1870), he seems quite willing to brush away all the rest:

"Let us speak less of revolution, and do a great deal more. Let us leave to others the task of developing theoretically the principles of social revolution and content ourselves with widely applying those principles, with *embodying them into facts.* Those who know me well will perhaps be astonished at my using this language, I who have worked so much in theory. But times have changed..."

I am not arguing that there is here a necessary inconsistency, but that this is not the attitude of a Scientific Anarchist. I wonder whether Bakunin would have called himself a Scientific Anarchist. I wonder whether there is such a thing.

Bakunin was avid of theory. What he gives us is the advanced thought of the nineteenth century, most of it is quite true and has become our commonplace. (He is especially strong on the grounding of ethics in social nature.) But as a theorist he is never concrete enough; one simply nowhere gets the factual analysis of Marx, the concrete inventiveness of Kropotkin, the legislative poetry of Comte, the historical flyers of Hegel, etc. The excitement of Bakunin's kind of theorizing—affirming the "scientific attitude" and extolling Nature—must have sprung from the argument in the milieu of high-minded and sensitive intelligentsia looking for a new and true faith to satisfy the whole soul. We sometimes get a hint of this excitement from turns of reasoning that Bakunin employs, for instance that the Idealists are crass materialists whereas the Materialists live for an ideal; or that a world-machine is more divine that orders and corrects itself without a god intervening. At one time such thoughts spoken with passionate conviction to an earnest mind must have been bolts of lightning. Today we might, rather, wonder that Bakunin put so much hope in getting to true thoughts about nature. The passionate "man as thinker" is no longer a figure for us.

Let me collect a few passages to show Bakunin's own doubts and difficulties about intellectuals and science and, presumably, "scientific anarchism." These quotations are taken out of context, but I think they reflect a turmoil underneath.

First, to give his more "reasonable" (and quasi-marxist) view, the necessity of true sociology:

"What the masses lack is organization and science—precisely the two things which have always constituted the power of governments. Above all there must be organization, which is impossible without the help of science. . . . Whoever contends that activity organized in this fashion constitutes infringement on the freedom of the masses or an attempt to create a new authoritarian power is a sophist or a fool."

This is from a polemic on behalf of the International Workingmen's Association. The general theory is that the masses have instincts to freedom and they are driven by despair, but they are hamstrung by their prejudices and superstition, and these must be combated by science. Also, "Social revolution can take place only when the people are stirred by a universal ideal evolving historically from the depths of the folk-instinct . . . when people have a general idea of their rights and a religious faith in those rights."

But again, he distinguishes the educated Socialist, "belonging, even though it be only by virtue of his education, to the ruling classes," and "the unconscious Socialist of the toiling people,":

"One knows all about Socialism, but he is not a Socialist; the other is a Socialist, yet does not know about it. Which is preferable? In my opinion it is preferable to *be* a Socialist. It is almost impossible to pass from abstract thought into life . . . lacking the driving-power of life-necessity. But the possibility of passing from being to thought has been proven by the whole history of mankind."

But then the bother is that knowledge is power and power makes an exploiter:

"What is education if not mental capital, the sum of the mental labor of all past generations? . . . That is why we often see intelligent men of the people stand in awe before educated fools."

Science is liberating as a corrective of prejudice, but as a form of capital it inevitably sets up a new class rule. Bakunin does not entertain the idea of a power of knowledge that liberates the soul also from exploiting. And he persistently draws the conclusion of the necessity of a socially compelled equality, whether of money or brains:

"There will be none of those gifted few who reach for the skies, but instead there will be millions who, now debased and crushed by the conditions of their lives, will then bestride the world like free and proud men; there will be no demi-gods, but neither will there be slaves. The demi-gods and the slaves will become humanized; the former will step down somewhat and the latter will rise a great deal. There will be no place for deification, nor for contempt."

Might I suggest that Dostoievskian passages like this indicate that for Bakunin contempt and humiliation are the essence of exploitation? And indeed if we turn to the remarks on "Tactics" that are the most interesting in this book, we suddenly find formulations like the following:

"One must have the Devil within himself in order to be able to arouse the masses; otherwise there can be only abortive speeches and empty clamor, but not revolutionary acts."

Or again:

"The sentiment of rebellion, this satanic pride, which spurns subjection to any master whatever, whether of divine or human origin, alone produces in man a love for independence and freedom."

"I will revolt against all those arrogant civilizers—whether they call themselves Germans or workers—and in rebelling against them I shall serve the cause of revolution against reaction."

This refers to the attempt of the Socialists of France to dictate to the peasants in 1870. "What is the basis of this claim? It is the pretended or real superiority of intelligence, of education—in a word, a workers' civilization over that of the rural population."

Perhaps as a summary formula that could reconcile all these difficult opposites, we might say that the right use of science is to break old bonds and stir up trouble.

"It is thus that the people's mind awakens. And with the awakening of that mind comes the sacred instinct, the essentially human instinct of revolt, the source of all emancipation."

PAUL GOODMAN

Letters

Problems of Resistance

Like any other people the overwhelming majority of Germans are against war, but in spite of this fact the majority voted in the last election for the party and government of chancellor Adenauer, of whom everybody knows that he is for rearmament. Nevertheless it must be mentioned that Adenauer is backed not only by the American Dollar but also by the churches, especially by the Roman Catholic church, which supports rearmament. The churches, especially the R. C. Church, have a great influence in Germany in shaping the results of elections. The influence of the Catholic Church in shaping the history of Germany is to-day more important than it ever was since the Reformation.

That armies and armaments signify war has been demonstrated several times in the last century to the German people, the last lesson was Hitler, and that is not forgotten. This contradiction between the voting and the experiences of the German people is explained by the fact that occupation by the Bolshevik forces is almost as much feared as a war, by all classes of the population. The communist party of West-Germany is to-day insignificant, the very Bolsheviks have destroyed it by their own criminal behavior towards the people, so that the members and voters deserted it. That the propaganda and actions of the Bolsheviks are incompatible and farther apart than day and night was not only realized by the people but also by old members of the Communist party, who had been for 10 to 12 years in the prisons and concentration camps of Hitler for their membership of the illegal party; many of them became in less than 24 hours bitter enemies of Communism after they had their first experiences with the Bolsheviks in "action".

The people suffered terribly by the occupation of the Bolsheviks. In the first year of the occupation it was murder, robbery and violation of women; any woman had to give in to any soldier or took the chance of being killed by him. Later in the course of time this behaviour gradually abated, and today it is not often committed. The Russian army behaved in the Satellite states not much better when it occupied them. War rouses the worst instincts in men, and this sort of behaviour we can notice more or less in almost every army in war, but in the Russian army it was so bad, that it can only be compared with the sacking of cities by the lansquenets in a war in the middle-ages.

The reader may think perhaps that I want to blame or even to slander the Russian soldiers and people! Far be that from me! I am international, and the Russian people is as much dear to me as the neighbour next door, and I believe honestly even more so, because I have received much friendship from the Russian people when I lived in Russia before the first World War. No! I lay all the blame for the behaviour of the Russian soldiers at the door of the methods of Stalin and of the Bolsheviks. A dictator can corrupt and will corrupt the behaviour and character of a people to the bottom, in fact he can only exist when the people is sufficiently corrupted. And the more oppressive such a dictator is, and the longer such a dictatorship lasts, the more corruptive will be the result, especially amongst the younger generation. I had 12 years' time to make my observations in this line during the Hitler rule, and amongst the Russians the dictatorship had the same results. And if ever the American people should have the disaster to be under a dictatorship we will see the same results there. I believe this! and I shall believe it until somebody proves to me that I am wrong.

The amazing behaviour of the Russian army is incredible to everybody who has known the Russian people only in pre-Bolshevik times. Everybody who has lived amongst the Russian people at that time will agree with me that it was the most goodhearted and harmless people in the world. In pre-Bolshevik times I had lived in Russia, and in about a dozen other countries, and I have never met a more goodhearted people than the Russians. That they would be able to commit any violence against anybody I would have considered ridiculous. And everybody who knew the Russians and whom I have asked for his opinion about this question has agreed with me. The Russian soldiers were in the second World War 180 degrees different from the Russian soldiers in the first World War. And that because they were forced and educated to violence, after the methods of Stalin and his henchmen.

It is not surprising when Stalin had broken the Russian people in to his methods. A country with a dictator is ruled more

by fear and suspicion than by anything else. It depends of course on what sort of man the dictator is, and what grade of terror he employs; dictatorships are not equal. The people, from the child to the next man to the dictator, fear the dictator, and the latter everybody else. Nobody knows what may happen to him at the next moment and can have hardly any confidence in anybody, not even in the persons most dear to him, may that be his children, parents or best friends, in case he is opposed to the dictator. They all may be really faithful to him yet there is the torture when they are arrested. To stand a torture requires of course courage and faithfulness, but alas that is not enough, the bodily nerves come in the first place into play, i. e. whether his nerves are able to stand the strain or not, and that cannot be verified until the torture takes place. I have known about 1,000 prisoners who were tortured by the Gestapo. Amongst them were only five who had admitted nothing. The aim of every torture of the Gestapo. was, and of the N.K.V.D. is, to make the culprit inculpate himself and others. The Gestapo. used almost only bodily pains in these performances, while the N.K.V.D. works more on the nerves and no-sleep for the culprits; it seems that the N.K.V.D. has the Gestapo. beaten in the results. The facts are that under no circumstances can any human being stand this for days and perhaps even weeks, unless his nervous system is extraordinarily strong.

Accordingly to my experiences it is impossible under these systems of torture to build up a strong and lasting movement against the dictators. Such an underground movement must and will grow, and the only means are propaganda. Alas! Sooner or later a member will run up with his propaganda against a wrong person, that may be a stool-pigeon or some other skunk, but he gets arrested and the arrest of the whole movement starts soon. A few get killed during the torture, a few may be sentenced to capital punishments, and the rest go to the penitentiary or concentration camp. We had hundreds of cases like that in Germany during that time: when most all papers proclaimed in the world that in Germany there was no resistance against Hitler, and Churchill in England made a speech in which he said: If England would ever come into trouble then it needed a man like Hitler.

Therefore it is obvious that a resistance based on an organization must be a failure against dictators who use such ruthless warfare against their adversaries. Such an organization can keep up the hopes of the people for a delivery in the future, but for the overthrow of the dictator it is worthless, because the warfare of the dictator prevents its development, it is killed in the bud.

Only a non-organized spontaneous rebellion of the people can set an end to every dictator, and that quickly. Libertarians can drive this rebellion onward by individual propaganda from man to man, and by taking the initiative when the rebellion is there against the dictator. In this manner they also avoid, in case a libertarian is arrested for propaganda, that all the members of an organization are consequently arrested.

All peoples have a different history, way and view of life, and the surrounding world, out of which distinctive ideas and ways of action have developed. The Germans in their fight against the Nazis clung to their hankering for organizations, and to their particular respect for authority, drilled into them by Marxism and militarism. These prevented them from starting an open rebellion against the Nazi-state. It seems that the Germans in the Russian Zone have learned from the terrible lessons which were taught to them by their fruitless underground movements against the Nazis, and changed their methods of struggle against a ruthless dictator.

The spontaneous rebellion of the workers and people in Berlin and the other cities of the Russian Zone, last June, is the only kind of fight which can be of success against a cruel dictator. These fights go on in the Russian Zone with sit-down strikes, sabotage, armed resistance groups, etc. And the same resistance and struggle goes on in the Satellite-states.

WILLY FRITZENKOETTER
Germany

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