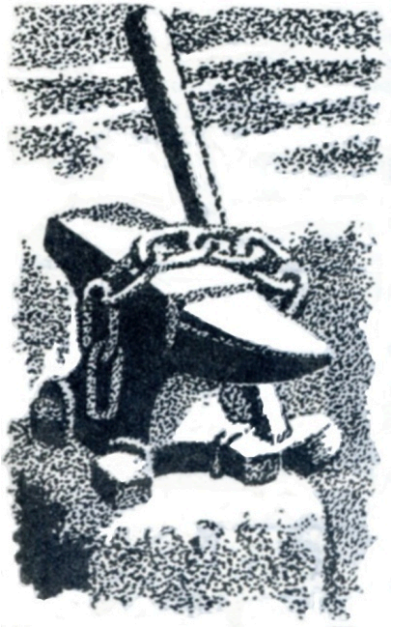
The Negativity of Anarchism



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An investigation into anarchism always directs the researcher towards progressive and freedom seeking events recorded through the centuries onto the pages of history, opening up new social outlooks of negating institutionalised authority and replacing it with the concepts of solidarity, mutualism and self management.

Yet, we must also recognise that at the same time, authority, be it a tradition, a custom, a law or arbitrary has since the evolvement of the human species, placed its claws upon a number of human interrelationships, an incident that undoubtedly derives from an even more pre-historic and animalistic era. Despite the consequences, history records through the ages, a continuous effort of struggles by humanity to liberate itself from the claws of authority.

The advents of those struggles were so varied, the battles so cruel and rigid that relatively few have reached an anarchist outlook. The majority of the struggles fought for partial freedoms and often tried to reconcile their new freedoms with the maintenance of ancient authorities believing they could never evolve into autocratic authoritarianism, or innocently believed authority to be useful in their endeavours to maintain and defend the new freedoms. In modern history many individuals have struggled for constitutional or democratic freedom, unfortunately this freedom has always been confined to the custody of a government. Such misunderstanding in the complexity of social evolvement has produced social statism; that is socialism imposed authoritatively and deprived of the fundamental concept which gives it life.

Comprehending that socialism can only flourish in an environment of complete freedom, the editorial collective of Libertarian Anthology has subsequently decided to devote this fourth issue to an essay written in the 1970's by David Thoreau Wieck, *The negativity of Anarchism*.

The members of this editorial collective were first exposed to this essay by Wieck in the pages of the multilingual magazine "interrogations" in 1976, produced in Paris, France. "interrogations" was an international magazine of anarchist research, publishing articles in French, English, Italian and Spanish incorporating a resumé of the essay in the alternative languages.

In September of 1977 we once again came across this essay, this time translated into Spanish by compañero Eduardo Vivancos from Canada, published in number 32 of "Ruta", an anarchist publication produced in Venezuela by exiled Spanish anarchist compañeros.

It could be said that by republishing this essay we are positioning ourselves within a certain heterodoxy. Nothing new for us, for we have previously incurred these type of accusations. None the less, we are well aware that it is necessary to occasionally shake the social bodies of doctrine if we do not want to paralyse the continuous transition and evolvement required particularly within anarchism ensuring it does not stagnate as an ideal and that it cannot be misrepresented. Anarchism by its own definition and condition of permanent confrontation is obliged to question itself every day by testing the soundness of its structures, the foundations of its ideals, given that it progresses from within the confines of a permanently evolving egoistical and suicidal society.

For these reasons we thought it would be worthwhile to publish this philosophical examination, because to read David Wieck is to travel along a new road of the libertarian ideal.

The Negativity of Anarchism

by David Thoreau Wieck

Anarchism is notoriously pluralistic in the sense that there are many "philosophers" and many "schools" with no obvious common ground except the rejection of political sovereignty implicit in *an-archia.* Not unreasonably, anarchism is frequently taken to be a family of minimally related ideas that deny the legitimacy of the state and (usually) propose its abolition. This view, although texts in support of it could be cited, is narrow; for anarchism is not merely antistate, somehow it is an idea or theory of freedom. But the expressions "*not merely"* and "*freedom"*, are indefinite and much in need of elucidation.

I offer here a view of anarchism, a way of understanding it in terms of a common basis, that I hope will make evident its importance and its meaning. This is a problematical undertaking, quite different from a study of the thought of an individual anarchist writer. It calls for decisions about what is essential in the various anarchist traditions, and there is high risk that the result be more revelatory of one's own bias or predilections than of anarchism past or present. More exactly, then, the present article is an expression of my intuition, based chiefly on my personal experience of anarchism, of what is central to anarchism and what most worthwhile in the sense of statement about human society and human being. In the course of the reflective effort to express my intuition as precisely as I can, I have come to see a number of fundamental issues in a way that is new and illuminating to me.

My discourse is objective in mode and intended for philosophical scrutiny. I wish to make it quite clear; however, especially because I believe

that what one thinks and claims to know in the objective mode is inseparable from one's convictions ("where one is coming from", as the apt phrase had it), that I share the broad attitude or orientation that I identify as anarchist.

As I say later on, the perspective of anarchism, as a living idea rather than as an intellectual possibility, is a perspective of oppressed people to whose anger at their oppression and the oppression of their comrade's anarchism gives voice; the purpose of anarchism is to serve as a means for putting end to those oppressions. Just how far one can grasp the meaning of life conditions that are not one's own -a question raised vigorously by blacks and by women- I am not sure. (I have experienced oppressions but not as a permanent condition to which society and circumstance have condemned me; in the family of mankind I have been a middle-privileged person at least.) However that may be, I am convinced that anarchism can become meaningful only if one has a concrete sense of the "social reality" - I am afraid I do not know a better term out of which it arises, and I hope that I have kept this reality, namely the human meaning of oppression, in constant view.

The Anarchist Idea

To a preliminary conception of anarchism and of what I mean by a common basis, comparison and contrast of the role of "ideas" and "ideology" in the history of socialism and anarchism will provide a way of approach, less circuitous than may at first appear.

Anarchism is usually called an ideology, and in some senses of a term that everyone defines at will, this characterization would be correct if not very informative. I prefer to define ideology, in the spirit of Marx and Mannheim, as an aprioristic and rationalized belief system that serves to justify, and to mystify on behalf of, the dominance and power of some social group or some institutional complex. (This definition is meant to comprehend transcendental ideologies, ie., theologies, as well as social ideologies.) Although I believe it to have broader theoretical utility, the reader is free to regard this definition, which will have a thematic func-

tion in my discussion, as a means of making distinctions useful in clarifying the status of anarchism.

Socialism before Marx expressed an incompletely determinate but by no means abstract ideal, roughly describable as abolition of bourgeois property, economic exploitation, and class division, vindication of the dignity of labour, and institution of production for use. Philosophically and by social science, Marx tried to create for socialism a theory of method and a justification for its goals. Subsequently, in the historically important variants of socialism, "Marxist theory", or perhaps more exactly the philosophy and methodology of Engels, suitably glossed, became doctrinal truth: first of all in the German Social Democracy and American DeLeonism and then in Leninism and its derivatives. "Orthodoxy", "deviation", "revisionism", and the remainder of a vocabulary of rigidified theology-like system, enforced by a centralized party, signal the transition. This last stage of Marxism, these systems of truth, are fully ideological in the sense of the definition above.

(That the Marxisms which have a share of the world historical scene are aprioristic belief-systems resting on definitive foundations is widely recognized for the Leninist Instances. If it is less usual to regard Leninism as justifying and mystifying on behalf of a dominant social group, this is in part because, from a bourgeois standpoint, itself ideological, it seems like a proseletyzing faith. I see its primary function as justification of the rule of the leadership of a party over its members, of the rule, present or future, of a party over society; and as mystification of the people. Leninist Marxism turns out therefore to be an ideology of state-dominion that merges with -appropriates or perhaps is appropriated by- ideologies of nationalism. Social democracy, of course, has found accommodation with capitalist ideology.)

Anarchism, by contrast, while not free of ideological tendency, has never been dominated or delimited by the theories of its philosophical and scientific proponents. Those anarchists who have advocated doctrinal unification have usually affiliated eventually with Marxist parties, as have advocates (the same persons most often) of party-like organizations intended to lead and direct popular movements of social revolution. The

anarchist belief is fundamental that no person, no theory, no historical process, stands higher than oneself, and that life does not yield primacy to thought abstracted from it. The most significant legacy from the past therefore is certain values and (especially) principles, the lives, and often the deaths, of exemplary and heroic persons, and cautionary experiences. Resolve and action, knowledge of one's desires and goals, is what matters: which is to say that Marxist accusations of voluntarism do not malign anarchism.

Mannheim's classification of anarchism as utopian rather than ideological -because it seeks to sunder and not to sustain the social present- has much to recommend it but is still not accurate and is prejudicial moreover in that "utopian" (as much as "ideological") was for Mannheim a term of contrast to the realistic methods of liberal social-scientific meliorism.

Anarchism, non-ideological and prior to philosophy and to science, we may best, if with slight semantical awkwardness, speak of as an Idea: a mode of speech familiar to at least some anarchists, certainly to those in the Spanish and Italian traditions.

Characterization as an Idea situates anarchism in that constellation or cosmos of Ideas, kindred in spirit one to another although wholly concordant by no means, that assumed major significance in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in Europe and the Americas: Ideas of socialism, reason, liberty, equality, democracy, mankind, progress, history, the nation. Certain of these, such as anarchism and socialism, expressed social ideals directly; certain, among them socialism, and the idea of the nation equally fatefully, became the source of later ideologies. We lack an unambiguous name for that pre-ideological mode of thought; idealistic may be best but in a sense that is pre-philosophical and discontinuous with philosophic Idealism.

(The sense of Idea here is not Hegel's but that of a recently emerged mode of thought that he sought to understand and appropriate. He blamed the "abstract". Ideas for the course of the French Revolution, not realizing, or preferring not to see that although they were undoubtedly used as manipulative abstractions, i.e., ideologically, by the wielders of new power,

they had meaning enough, and concretely, for the poor and oppressed.)

An Idea like anarchism, as I conceive it, is a thought, a thinking, a conviction, a desire, an aim, a vision of life, whose nature is an insistence that it be realized and whose full meaning is to become manifest only in its realization. It expresses a potentiality of human being, recognizable by human beings and embraceable as a goal that together they endeavour to consummate. It exists in (and as) social movements, in (and as) movements of mind, in (and as) the lives, actions, and experiences of persons. It has ground in the social present and objectivity and potential reality as a shared and social aim. Although capable of articulation, it is not essentially conceptual, certainly not rationalistic. At its core, as it's "matter", as its material source, is *feeling* - feelings about relations among human beings, about personal identity and worth, about human being.

In terming anarchism an Idea, I mean to convey specifically that it is non-doctrinal; that it has always been "understood" rather than defined; that it gives shared meaning to deep-felt longings; that it indicates an ideal aim for which a social movement, of everyday human beings who in practice will often enough contradict their ideals, is called forth; that it expresses an "ought" that is an anticipation of its object of striving; that it serves as object of faith, as ground of solidarity and mutual aid; that it has been enriched but not transformed essentially by supporting speculations. and reasoned argument; and that it has remained continuously and intensely in touch with its originating ideals.

By no means does this anarchism signify mindlessness, irrationalism or an anti-intellectual attitude - a misinterpretation common in the youth-radical movements of the 1960's, possibly reflecting confusion between (in my terminology) ideas and ideology. On the contrary, self-education, thinking through and discussing exhaustively the meaning and consequences of one's basic beliefs, being their master and not their servant, these are implicit in "the anarchist Idea" and were the norm, and frequently the practice, of traditional anarchist movements. To say that this Idea is a thought seeking its realization is to say that it demands a maximum of social inventiveness and practical imagination, that it demands (again) that one know what one wants. It is opposite to obedience to ideas

abstracted from life and to action uninformed by thought. This, rather than the anarchism of one or another "theorist", is the anarchism whose meaning I shall try to bring forth.

The fact that the anarchism in question remained essentially an Idea grounded in feeling does not mean that this Idea has no history or evolution, but I shall not attempt to deal with that evolution here.

Anarchism

With the foregoing formal conception of anarchism in mind, I now offer a statement of its content.

The theme of political sovereignty will be the point of departure, with proviso that we adopt the wide sense of "politics" employed by contemporary feminists who by speaking of sexual politics have drawn notice to a veritable host of politics.

(The term "politics" shall refer to power-structured relationships, arrangements whereby one group of persons is controlled by another. By way of parenthesis one might add that although an ideal politics might simply be conceived of as the arrangement of human life on agreeable and rational principles from whence the entire notion of power over others should be banished, one must confess that this is not what constitutes the political as we know it, and it is to this that we must address ourselves. Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics*, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1970, pp. 23-24.)

On this model ("the political as we know it") we may conceive of the politics of production and consumption, the politics of education, the politics of race, the politics of religion, the politics of art, the politics of age -- and the politics of every social sphere, the conventionally political included, in which a group or class or caste dominates others, or some institutional complex rules the lives of people. In many of these spheres, exchangeable slogans of *freedom* and *liberation*, and more problematic slogans of *power* as well, have been raised.

As might be expected, there is also a politics of liberation - a politics of overt or covert power-structures that control particular movements of liberation.

We shall have in mind, then, a panoply of "political" relationships, among them, masters and slaves, governors and governed, propertied and propertyless, employers and employees, male and female, teachers and students, old and young (and young and old), dominant and subjugated races, party leaders and party members, bureaucrats and clients, labour leaders and rank and file, commanders and troops, priests and their flocks (and on some views: God and human being), imperial nations and subject-peoples, liberators and those whom they propose to liberate. With respect to each of the power relationships one can identify a distinctive ideology, sometimes formally articulated, although rarely with the thoroughness of orthodox Leninism, sometimes primitive or parasitic on other ideologies.

Anarchism can be understood as the *generic* social and political Idea that expresses negation of all power, sovereignty, domination, and hierarchical division, and a will to their dissolution; *and* expresses rejection of all the dichotomizing concepts that on ground of Nature, Reason, History, God or other, divide people into those dominant and those justly subordinated. Anarchism is therefore far more than anti-statism, but government (the state), as claimant to ultimate sovereignty and hence to the right to outlaw or legitimate particular sovereignties, and because sustained from self-interest by those who guard particular fiefs and turfs, stands at the center of the web of social dominion and is appropriately the focus of anarchist critique. Anarchism is anti-political, therefore, in a comprehensive sense for which electoral and parliamentary abstentionism is a fitting symbol.

The relationship between the anarchist *idea* and my definition of ideology is by now obvious: a relationship justified by the aptness of the anarchist perspective for assessment of the exploitation of ideas by power and the ideologizing of ideas, a project to which Marxism contributes mightily but which its own commitment to power betrays. For the state itself, traditional political philosophy, above all in the epoch of the

nation-state, has provided consistent ideological support.

Anarchism then is the social and political philosophy that proposes the eradicating of all divisions between (political) haves and have nots, the dissolving rather than the redistributing of power; and the abolishing of identities of ruler and subject, leader and led, learned and ignorant, superior and inferior, master and servant, human and inhuman. If the anarchist ideal were realized, all persons in their unique individuality would be related to each other in multiple non stratified societies of voluntary (freely chosen) association.

Today, individuality signifies, almost invariably, membership in an elite class or caste, opposite a mass, and depends on (is given definition by) that membership; such individuality is not authentic because not properly individual. What is presently thought of as socialization is a stabilized, preferably frictionless politics to which the subordinate assent. The aim of anarchism is universal and genuine individuality and complete socialization, their antithesis overcome by, precisely, the elimination of constraining and distorting contexts of power. Then all persons would be political equals, not in the sense of equality of power (for anarchism negates social power) or necessarily of goods but in the sense that no one, no group, and no institution would rule, control, decide for or dominate another. There would be society, but no politics.

Individuality (uniqueness) and the socialization of human existence, so reconceived, can be identified as basic values of anarchism, values in turn describable as social freedom. Justice will no longer be defined in terms of distribution, or of rights that presuppose sovereignty, certainly not by lawfulness. If slavery be taken as metaphor for domination, applicable literally or nearly so to many of its forms, justice and injustice of institutions can be defined in terms of "slavery" so that an Institution is unjust if and insofar as persons implicated in it are the "slaves" of others. However benign and altruistically intentioned, "slaveries" violate human being systematically and essentially and this cannot be made-good. The "master" of course thinks otherwise, and otherwise says his ideologies.

Plainly, to strive for the total abolition of "slaveries" is not the only

possible mode of response to their recognition: if it were, there would be no liberalisms or Marxisms and anarchists would be everywhere. If convinced that abolition is impossible, one may choose to mitigate reform or exchange systems of power; without devaluing freedom, one might not hope for more than marginal and sporadic realization of it. Except for incidental remarks, I shall avoid discussion of practicality and the philosophical problems concerning judgment of it, problems that are particularly difficult because the generalization of anarchist attitudes toward institutions might have significant results, in keeping with anarchist values, even if the ideal aim were never approximated. I limit myself to trying to exhibit the meaning of the anarchist Idea, a project prior to, even though not fully distinguishable from, judgments of practicality, and necessary (I believe) because the degree to which an anarchist perspective restructures perception and anticipation of human being, of society, and of history, is rarely appreciated sufficiently.

(Sometimes the characteristics of anarchism discussed here are expressed, by anarchists and others, as *anti-authoritarianism*. This is an unhappy mode of expression, first because antiauthoritarianism is professed by numerous and diverse political groups; second because there are forms of authority that do not entail power over persons; third because authority is that to which power pretends and which its ideology claims for it; and for other reasons. Authority that is specifically and voluntarily delegated is not power-over-persons, although it may be converted to such power. Recognition of the authority of technical competence is not submission to power, unless the technically competent are permitted to determine ends as well as means, or to determine means in a fashion that determines ends. The authority of each in his or her own sphere of activity is a way of enunciating the freedom of each. Analysis of authority, to distinguish the genuine from the spurious, has been lacking in anarchist literature; the problem is met squarely by Giovanni Baldelli's *Social Anarchism*, N. Y.: Atherton Press, 1971. from which I have learned much.)

Anarchism and Marxism

Persons familiar with "early Marx" might suggest that I have just described uncorrupted Marxism. The matter is worth pursuit both for its own sake -since I believe Marxism and anarchism to represent truly basic alternatives- and in order to bring out other important dimensions of the anarchist Idea, especially its temporality.

Marx might be called a philosophical anarchist in the sense of the phrase that signifies affirmation of anarchy as an ideal without present relevance. The conflict between Marx and the anarchists in the First International makes it clear that Marx did not in organizational practice or revolutionary program share the anarchists' negativity toward power. He demanded control by the central organization over the sections; he insisted on programmatic unity, in effect the enforcement of agreement to truths of a leadership-elite; he destroyed the International rather than permit it to be an association of solidarity in diversity; he emphatically rejected the anarchist thesis that the abolition of the state was a present concern. Anarchist criticism of Marxism, in addition to unjustly Identifying Marx with later dialectical materialism, sometimes over stresses the historical personage Karl Marx but, besides foreshadowing the political and ideological practice of future socialism, including the Leninist monoliths, his behaviour reflects his conception of power and freedom.

The ideals sometimes (not so very frequently) affirmed in Marxism may not be significantly opposed to those of anarchism; but for all the time between the present and, in Marxism, the eventual realization of the ideal there is systematic variance. For Marx as for Marxism, no-power, to the extent acknowledged, is beyond History, while for anarchists it is within History, within the present, immanent as potentiality in the present.

Anarchism provides, as I have indicated, a critique of the politics of liberation itself - a critique that only a few Marxists have attempted. Basic to Marxism is the view that economic power is the key to a liberation of which the power of a party, the power of government, and the power of a specific class are (or are to be) instruments. Basic to anarchism is the

opposing view that the abolition of dominion and tyranny depends upon their negation, in thought and when possible action, in every form and at every step, from now on, progressively, by every individual and group, in movements of liberation as well as elsewhere, no matter the state of consciousness of entire social classes. Thus, anarchists see in Marxism an illusion of liberation and the creation of new structures of power that forever defer it and that nullify spontaneous liberations briefly tolerated. Correlatively, in the anarchist view the choices and actions of individuals are important for those persons, for their milieu, and for all of us; in the view of Marxists, collectivities and their actions alone have significance, are alone objectively real (this has turned out to be the operational meaning of Marx's famous Feuerbach thesis on the individual).

Congruently with theory, the strategies of Marxist movements have been strategies for conquest and use of power, strategies of affirmation of politics. In every country ruled by Marxists the basic politics, i.e. the basic structures of state, have been perpetuated, or if in collapse reinstituted and revivified, a fact that lends support to the claim that anarchism is the only social philosophy that asserts an alternative to the politics of power. (Of the various liberalisms, the anarchist critique need not be spelled out.)

In the light of the preceding, certain familiar Marxist polemics against anarchism can be subjected to inversion: the result is polemical also but perhaps not unfair. Rather than anarchism, it may be Marxism, with its vision of post-historical transcendence that is apocalyptic and utopian. Anarchism rather than Marxism may be capable of sustaining a conception of genuine social dialectic, for Marx's theory of superstructure and the primacy of impersonal economic forces inhibits, if it does not entirely rule out, an apprehension of continuous interplay among the many arenas of politics and liberation. It may be anarchism that implies the more complete view of anthropos because it does not by abstraction obscure and ignore the psychology and the now so important sociology of power. And it may therefore not be anarchism but instead Marxism, with its economic centrism, its controlling dialectic of technology and property that is simplistic and naive.

In the section that follows, part of the meaning of the above theses will be developed.

The New Relevance of Anarchism

Recent revival of interest in anarchism, and the tendency of some North American and Western European Marxists to revise Marxism in libertarian directions, allow explanation in terms of the present discussion.

First, anarchism is the natural generic expression for the many particular movements of liberation, including a number that have emerged in force only recently. As such a generic Idea, anarchism implies these liberations, and most lines of argument against particular power-and-dominance relations tend conversely to generalize to the anarchist position. Not merely awareness of twentieth century extensions of state power, therefore, has given anarchism contemporary "relevance" both for radical youth and for various intellectuals and social philosophers.

Anarchism does more than unify the many themes of liberation. For those who suspect that power rather than wealth may be the root of oppression, and that power may be the more comprehensive concept, anarchism offers a framework of explanation. Marxist have generally derived racism from the interest of the wealthy classes in dividing the mass of the people against one another; one does not have to deny this interpretation all validity to see that the psychology of social or ethnic domination, for the sake of domination, may be a deeper theme. It has been difficult, in view of the imperialist actions of the Russian state, to attribute imperialism and wars to economic and profit considerations primarily. In many other spheres, the sphere of "liberation" included, we see power sought after from motives deeper than a theory centered upon economics accounts for; while a theory centering upon power is capable of explaining also the seemingly irrational intensity of acquisitive behaviour.

Third, it is becoming Increasingly apparent that to speak about a "ruling class" in the present era is totally inadequate. Nationally and internationally, the economics of capitalist distribution retains its disproportionality

of wealth and poverty but now power is corporate and bureaucratic. Even that statement falls short, and phrases like "military-industrial complex" seem ineluctably apt. Individuals and groups face elaborate structures of power, national and transnational, and their self sense, even at relatively high levels of privilege, is likely to be one of powerlessness, helplessness, insecurity. The "class" that rules is not exactly a class of persons but more like an institutional complex whose administrative and managerial technicians work, one may say with only slight exaggeration, to jobdescription. Even if we define this personnel, together with the major beneficiary individuals and families, as "the ruling class", it remains nonetheless, in the U.S.A. as in the U.S.S.R., An impersonal power with replaceable figureheads. The "power" demands of the American 60's expressed a sense of contemporary society's, not America's alone, central problematic: the abstraction of power from persons in the form of "bureaucratic society", "managerial society", etc. Anarchism becomes more plainly relevant when power itself, not this group or that class of persons, reveals itself as the truth of the nation-state and of international capitalism and nationalistic socialism, and when power rather than wealth is the prime image of success, the one model presented for emulation.

Fourth, from many sources have come reasons to believe that any theory that finds the secret of human liberation in something so specific as the politics of property neglects the interdependence of the many liberations. Each species of dominance and power re-enforces other species, directly in ways that can be mapped sociologically, indirectly by requiring and engendering habits of rule and/or submission. Children who have undergone hierarchically structured families and schools will be most fortunate if enabled by countervailing experiences to affirm themselves thereafter in non power-structured situations, or to relate freely and responsibly as persons with persons, or to resist power rationally rather than by brief rebellion. Solidarity among, professedly antagonistic groups against challenge from below -the solidarity of union officials and corporate managers, to name a familiar type- is in striking contrast to the normal and self-defeating non-solidarity, most often mutual hostility, of oppressed groups from different categories. As we proceed more deeply into a world of Institutional management of human existence, and in that evolution might be approaching, if we have not already passed, a point of

no return, questions of liberation increasingly reveal themselves as a single issue of manifold human liberation.

Fifth, the interdependence of the many liberations suggests that human liberation must be a continuous process and that the anarchist method of seeking to transform qualitatively the scene of one's life, of trying to create spheres of freedom, even when one cannot affect large social institutions of property and government directly, may be a meaningful and necessary part of a multidimensional process of liberation in which many are active in varied and particular ways. This can be expressed by saying that anarchism proposes the continuous realization of freedom in the lives of each and ail, both for its intrinsic, immediate values and for its more remote effects, the latter unpredictable because they depend on the unpredictable behaviours of persons not known and of non personal historical processes.

Nevertheless, anarchism remains extraordinarily difficult to adopt other than "philosophically", i.e., intellectually, for it makes a severe dialectical demand: that persons envision and find ways to overcome a condition of objective and subjective powerlessness and futility, not by seeking power or planning its seizure, or by pleading with power, and so on, which are the ways of politics and the ways also by which people attempt to cope with everyday oppressions, frustrations, and resentments, but by negating power absolutely and *choosing powerlessness*. (Choice of powerlessness does not, however, imply passivity or lack of militancy. Anarchism and Taoism have much in common - but anarchism is not a way of merely personal salvation.) The demand is severe, given, in the U.S.A. for specific example, a society that is barren of public ideas other than the power-oriented; given a prevailing ethics that allows one to do whatever one wants so long as no one is hurt very directly; given that authentic models of liberty, individuality, and free cooperation are scarce; given a superficial but malignant pessimism about human being; given a complex of overlapping hierarchies such that all but a few people are relatively superior to others who are institutionally inferior; given a communications technology that provides a year-round circus of politics for the entertainment and mystification of the citizenry; given the rage, hatred, fear, envy that pervade the nation. Although the youth-radical

movements of the late 60's in the U.S.A. exhibited so many familiar themes of anarchism that "the Movement" might be described as proto-anarchist, a plausible interpretation of its collapse is that (mainly unacknowledged, often magical) expectations of power, even of instant power, were unfulfilled. Neo-Marxisms that retain a basic affirmation of power and a reassuring vision of power through history, while seeking to qualify themselves by incorporating libertarian themes, make lesser psychological and ethical demands.

Whether, in a society (and world) in which the reality and ideality of power are ubiquitous, anarchism, in the sense of generic liberation, can have meaning other than to be a way of life for a small number, would seem to depend on the possibility that the transcendence of power, i.e., integral freedom, becomes by many persons concretely imaginable, concretely thinkable, as the resolution and liquidation of the power-and powerlessness polarity. Because such a consciousness has never yet been realized on a large social scale, with the partial exception of a certain period in Spain, its potentialities have never been tested. But the choice of powerlessness, the choice, if run one must, to run with the hares and not with the hounds, and, beyond that, the choice to reject such definition of options, is a choice open to each person as a life-choice, and its intrinsic meanings are not invalidated either by choices others make or by verdicts of mindless History.

Anarchist Ethics

(a. Anarchist Principle)

I should like now to begin to present certain implications of an anarchist view of power and liberation.

In theories justificatory of anarchism one encounters a confusing variety of ethical arguments - a variety attributable in part but not entirely to the authors' desire to emphasize either the theme of individuality or the theme of sociality. In anarchist movements and the lives of anarchists, however, one finds something simpler - a consistent emphasis upon

principles and action from principle. Herein I believe lies a key to the ethical meanings of anarchism.

To the bourgeois, anarchist principle signifies fanaticism, to Marxists an unrealistic and irresponsible inadaptability to objective circumstance and historical necessity. "0n principle" anarchists abstain from all elections, refuse to form or support political parties or party-like organizations, refuse to appeal to or accept the aid of government to achieve immediate desired ends, refuse to accept positions of power, oppose and seek the downfall of liberal as well as overtly tyrannical states, oppose all wars and resist military service, refuse to be married by state or church, and so on. Anarchists refuse to "recognize" laws, courts, and police authorities, refuse to defend themselves by accepted legal procedures. Anarchists make a principle of direct (i.e., personal and non-mediated) action, a principle of solidarity, a principle of personal responsibility. In general the word "compromise" means for anarchists compromise of principles, and has only pejorative connotations. The conclusion would be difficult to avoid, that this "inflexibility" is somehow intrinsic to anarchism.

Action from principle has in different contexts very different meanings. In the anarchist context these various principles, this attachment to principle, this ethics and politics of strict (but not absolute) principle, all this becomes intelligible and coherent when the various principles are referred to a single principle, that one should neither exercise nor submit to power over persons, either by collectivities or persons; with the correlative belief that the downfall of power depends upon action from this principle. By this interpretation, negation of power can be described as the principle - of principles of anarchist action: in the end, perhaps it is, or should be conceived as the only principle.

(It is important to note that the principles mentioned are nearly all negative principles. Plainly they call for the supplement of concrete alternative actions fitted to circumstances, and an anarchist movement that knows nothing but its negative principles is a movement in decay.)

I believe that the central anarchist principle is best understood in inter-

connection with certain more general ideas: that the individual is the basic social reality; that individual voluntary consent is the ground of cooperation ("giving one's word", in the traditional anarchist movements, is the bond that unites); that everyone, oneself not excepted, is responsible for their actions; that social freedom depends on the self-discipline of each; and that the assumption of power or submission to power in any sphere of human activity is a negation of the fundamental reality of individuals, a negation intrinsically incapable of offset by other types of considerations. These ideas are, I would argue, existentially although not formally reciprocal, and are implicit in the negation of power-over persons as presented in Section II above. (The argument would be difficult and would probably turn on explication of 'individual as basic social reality. Here I note only that "basic social reality" does not entail "basic metaphysical reality".)

(b. Power and Violence; Fraternity and Love)

In two areas besides the question of property -which will be discussed separately- anarchists have differed sharply about principles. The dispute between anarchists who distrust formal organization, anarchist as well as other, and for whom the term "organization" is pejorative, and those who hold organization to be essential, would seem chiefly to represent a difference in sociological and psychological judgment, disguised by semantics of "organization" and "association", as to conditions under which the individual is lost and power emerges. No fundamental questions of ethics seem implicated.

The other area, deeply problematic, is that of pacifism, violence, and revolution. The main anarchist tradition has been revolutionary in a sense that endorses violence as a means of resisting and destroying the apparatus of force and violence by which power is maintained. (That the free society should be non-violent is agreed.) Within the framework of anarchist principle, it can be argued reasonably that violence against an oppressor who maintains his position by violence is not itself an act of oppression since one does not seek to (and will not) enslave or bring into subjection that person. The violence-affirming or violence-condoning tendency would seem to be asserting that negation of master/servant

("slave") relationships takes priority over the claims to respect for life of those who insist on being masters and, by violence, direct or indirect, make that insistence good. Unfortunately, major social oppression defends itself usually by hired or conscript instruments and, when defeated, by foreign armies. All these persons are oppressors in their instrumental roles, and subject to seduction and corruption by those roles, yet many in their own way are victims.

Here the anarchist who accepts violence is beyond clear guidance of principle. Even in its terrorist phases, however, anarchist violence has almost always been directed expressly and scrupulously against principals or executives of political and economic oppression, so that, by comparison with the anti-civilian terror-warfare of governments, or nationalist guerrilla warfare, or routine police terrorism in countless nations, to say nothing of the savage reprisal taken upon defeated working classes all through history, anarchist terrorism is ridiculously misnamed. Prevalence of an ethics of principle, rather than a utilitarianism that lends itself to self-deception, may be a major ground for this (self-) control; while the centering of principle in power-negation rules out the taking of hostages or other instrumental treatments of persons that are the usual transition from resistance to militarized warfare. The breakdown of anarchist principle in the Spanish anarcho-syndicalist movement, especially during the civil war and revolution, is a large and complex topic into which I cannot enter here.

In twentieth century anarchism, not merely within the Tolstoyan tradition, pacifism has been an important minoritarian tendency. Whether evolutionary or non-violently revolutionary, pacifist anarchism asserts that violence is even clearer negation of human being than is power, is perhaps even the genus of power, and introduces into anarchism a concept of love much stronger than the "fraternity" of the main tradition - universal, because unlike fraternity not restricted to solidarity of the oppressed- and tends thereby to transform the concept of the individual and the concept of freedom. Love will then be the ultimate positive concept, opposite to violence. I think that one can say that an anarchist, of whatever specific persuasion, who does not feel (more than *think*) such love and non-violence as ultimate values has not fully experienced the

meaning of anarchism, although love and non-violence are not easily lived in the midst of the oppression and suffering of others. In a sense, therefore, the motion of anarchism toward a full ethics of love, although a motion intrinsic to the Idea, remains to be realized, and may be realizable only in transition to anarchist society.

(c. Utilitarianism and Anarchism)

In certain anarchist theories, it should be noted, one finds instead of appeal to principle, essentially utilitarian arguments against the state, based on historical and scientific studies that would have no more than analogical presumption of applicability to other power relationships. The contentions of Kropotkin and Rocker, that the arts and sciences, peace, evolutionary progress, would be favoured by abolition of the nation-state suggest that the question of political decentralization, anti-statism in a narrow sense, may be distinct and separable from other questions of power, and such writers have tended to be somewhat less forceful in their critique of other forms of power. (Both Kropotkin in 1914 and Rocker in 1939 found it possible to support the Allied governments at war.) Bookchin's ecological justification of anarchism is kindred in method although he is rather more sensitive to other issues.

With respect to anarchist movements and their ethos, however, I do not see such speculation as foundational, and I would agree with Malatesta, whose explicit voluntarism may have expressed most nearly the spirit of the historical movement and the anarchist idea, that Kropotkin would have been an anarchist even if his biological and historical theories had been refuted. If so, the utilitarian and historical arguments would be confirmatory or, perhaps, a ground recognizable and acceptable to persons in the middle-privileged strata of society, for whom the perspective of the oppressed, which is the perspective of anarchism, and the anger of the oppressed, to which anarchism gives voice, often stridently, might otherwise be strange, disquieting and frightening, even abhorrent. Doubtfully would such arguments sustain the passion invested in the Idea, a faith for which many have given their lives.

The arguments which I see as having priority are, rather than utilitarian,

arguments of morality (justice) or arguments of freedom, or, when the argument takes eudemonistic form, appeal to actualization of human being. I am not suggesting inconsistency in an anarchism grounded in utilitarianism, especially if the concept of utility is broad; I do suggest the utilitarianism, well-suited to decision-making in collectivist societies and systems of sovereignty, does not much lend itself to expression of anarchist intent.

(d. The Ethics of Freedom)

The role of principle in anarchist thought and action, as I understand it, is to liberate the positive ethical life of human beings. Thus the principle of power-negation is rather a constitutive principle of the desired society than a rule for life within that society. Put more concretely: an authentic relationships between persons, as understood by anarchists, presupposes the absence of power of some over others, but "absence of power" says nothing positive about the content of that relationship and that content will be the creation of those persons.

If such is the meaning of anarchist principles, it would seem to follow that intercourse in an anarchist society would be conducted under conditions of voluntary agreement (often tacit, of course) and personal responsibility for this seems to be what one would mean by "absence of power". Faith in the possibility of anarchist society, then, would signify faith that, in the absence of structured power, of dominant and subordinate classes, and of habits of deference to authority and exercise of power, human beings can use the gift of speech and other subtle forms of communication to resolve their Intercourse into mutually beneficial patterns or into intelligent confrontation and disagreement and if necessary pacific disassociation, without need for commandments of morality.

One would not, however, say of such a society that it is post-ethical as one might of a Marxist society, after the state has withered at last, in which the economic form of communism would be the sociological realization of the ethical. Of anarchy one might say instead that ethics had resolved itself into new human being, a metaphor that would signify that faith and trust of persons toward persons, rather than contingent modes of coopera-

tion, would be the vital center. Put otherwise: nothing secures an anarchist society, whether of large extent or of commune-size or consisting of just two persons, except continuous realization of the human potentiality for free agreement and disagreement, always in recognition of the personhood of the other. If anarchism does not remain clear to the last of the institutional thinking that Marxists call materialist, it must finally become incoherent and the individualism (or personalism) that twinned with the corresponding version of sociality is the soul of anarchism, would be threatened with extinction.

In a society of hierarchies -of discriminations against classes or castes and condemnation of various large numbers of persons to particular kinds of limited existence to others' advantage- coercive institutional machinery is everything and its guarantee and enforcement by state-power is of the social essence. If we think of voluntary action, choice, decision, autonomy, as central to the meaning of being human -as the main philosophical traditions assert- then anarchism can be understood as seeking to dissolve those institutions of power that make life-decisions for us, that offer to substitute themselves for our freedom and relieve us of burdens of responsibility, and do so whenever they successfully coerce us to accord our will to their demands. Then, anarchism is expressive of a will to restore, and/or create, personhood and human being; whereas in surrendering to or *exercising* dominion one substitutes for oneself an institutional definition, an institutional being, one ceases to be oneself. It will be plain, I think, given these premises, that by voluntary surrender of freedom, by submission to a protectorate such as the Hobbesian state is claimed to be, one yields far more than the exercise of certain liberties.

Anarchism as Negative

It may now be clear why a name (an-archist) negative by etymology is appropriate to the import of anarchism.

This appropriateness can be illustrated with respect to a familiar species of power, that of racial oppression. If the thoroughgoing negation of racial oppression is, as one might reasonably think, a society in which

recognition of "racial" identity has vanished, or in which racial terms, if indeed sense can be made of them when oppression does not define them, have become minor descriptive terms without social consequence, then it would be foolish to ask what the theory of this raceless society would be or how it would deal with racial relations. For the U.S. integrationist movement of the 1950's the slogan Freedom Now said all that needed be said, just as, more than a century before, Abolition, a saying that of course earned one the title "fanatic", a title yet to be repealed, was all that needed be said of chattel slavery.

A second illustration, less obvious because even now barely thinkable, would be a society, usually called androgynous, in which recognition as male and female would make reference to nothing but certain physiological matters and reproductive capacities and would be non-indicative of personality, economic role, or worth. Sexes would not constitute classes (or more exactly castes) and sexual identity would have only the significance that each chose to give to it. What this means requires no elaborate explanation, only a certain imagination, an ability to rid oneself of preconceptions and to conceive of what seems incapable of being thought without contradiction. "What will be the relations between the sexes in such a society?" - the question makes erroneous assumptions.

From every locus of power, it has always been inconceivable, because contrary to the aprioris of the sustaining ideology, that its system be abolished. From the standpoint of the priesthood it has always been inconceivable that religion dispense with it, that its flock survive bereft of shepherd.

With respect to the anarchist concept of social existence, the questions "Who will rule?" "Who will govern?" and -what is less obvious intuitively- "Who will decide?" become non relevant questions. No theory of total-society decision-making would be called for. "Power to the people", "Let the people decide", although of idealistic intention, perpetuate the sovereignty of the whole and are not anarchist. In practice such qualified (democratic) sovereignty means that "representatives" of the people constitute a class of decision-makers over against a mass that makes no decisions except (perhaps) to choose their rulers, a choice

inevitably reconstrued as majoritarian. Where the demos rules, power and its problems remain; a people represented, as Rousseau said, is enslaved. Anarchy means the dissolution and disappearance of democratic sovereignty (or its pretence) also.

In an anarchist society every person decides and there is no class of deciders. Cooperative actions result from voluntary agreements. This is easier to visualize in a small society lacking complex relations of production and distribution; larger scale cooperation presumes longer-term agreements, reliance on the good will of others as norm, agreement to standard procedures (non-coercive, non-power-based institutions) to achieve commonly desired ends and to resolve differences and conflicts. (A principle of individual decision and voluntary agreement does not mean that driving on right or left, using metric or non-metric measures, not to say basic economic practices, are continually in question and one knows not what to expect in a topsy-turvy world.) What must be premised is that the people involved shall by and large be willing -as the way they live and are, rather than by reflective commitment- to affirm each other's humanity and uniqueness and to pursue their differing interests under conditions of voluntary agreement and responsibility for their actions.

In saying that everyone decides, one does not mean that each can cause the world to be as (s)he would wish it: for there can be just one actual world, and if I willed the world effectively then I would will it for, and in lieu of, others. The others, instead, present me with their spontaneity, their choosings, which of course foreclose many practical possibilities for me; in more than compensation for which, one would hope, my possibilities are enriched by living in a world of persons who are themselves choosing rather than living out the consequences of technology, market, and other impersonal forces that have pre-empted their freedom and mystified their intelligence.

Nor, in saying that everyone decides, does one mean that everyone conceivably affected by a particular decision participates in it. No doubt we have, in our everyday experience, little ground for confidence that the people on whom we depend, economically and otherwise, will reliably do their best; and so we put faith in complex systems of control over others,

and of course over ourselves. But the anarchist thought is that social cooperation can be founded upon the autonomy and responsibility of individuals and groups in their spheres of activity, so that the society is the product of the decisions of all, both individually and jointly by agreement.

But it is obvious that "no class of deciders", "non-collectivity", even if realizable in a moderately complex world, cannot well be applied to all the familiar kinds of social processes, even if the society were disburdened of many functions, such as the military, that would have no possible place in an anarchy.

Practically, if we are all by our choosing to participate in making our world, it would seem necessary that a principle -a practical rather than an ethical principle- of minimum large-scale change be followed generally, so that communication and intelligence be most effective and so that individual choices, and in consequence agreements, contractual and tacit, be made within a world one somewhat understands. The restless technology of our centuries flourishes in a world where institutions of power impose its innovations, provide its workforce, and manipulate its consumers, and where dominant classes are eager to magnify their power and wealth through technological supremacy. Anarchy would not provide these conditions, nor could anarchist decision-making be expected to cope with continuous major technological revolution. Ceaseless and rapid demographic expansion that forces constant dissolution and reformation of life-complexes (neighbourhoods, towns, cities, regions) creates a turmoil that free people cannot deal with any more intelligently than can the present Institutions. Many technological patterns already existing may also make demands for decision-making that cannot well be met except on a basis of collective institutions that create bureaucratic and other forms of power. That is, anarchist society would not be readily compatible, if compatible at all, with certain practical goals or ways of life or with certain societal rhythms.

In the era of unchallenged technological ideology, to which Marxism contributed its share, such concessions would have been regarded as determining conclusively the reactionary nature of anarchism. In the era

of ideologies of progress, they would similarly have stamped anarchism as impossible of realization just because it does not extrapolate what was then thought of as progress, and as undesirable because unsuited to spiralling future progress. Today it may be easier to agree that incompatibility with certain practical goals is not necessarily a defect or limitation. The kinds of things that cannot be done well in an anarchist society may be just those that release the blind and uncontrolled historical processes that determine much of our existence in a manner that renders our will ineffectual and that even determines our will.

Perhaps the major thrust of serious social thinking for two centuries has been toward solution of the problem of determination by history, by the past, by yesterday: how shall we be free today to solve today's problems? Virtually all of this thinking, however, has posed the question as one of achieving control. By sheer force, and sometimes also by social sciences, statist societies seek to master these historical processes, and have given very little evidence of ability to do so. (Besides which, the values and interests in terms of which the attempt is made are plainly those of the controlling groups or institutions.) This ambition of control is a way of human pride.

In anarchist society human beings would, presumably, seek to free themselves from processes of institutional momentum by consciously choosing rhythms of change, and technologies, harmonious with viable rhythms of life-choice, in order to avoid a need, for survival, to create institutions of power. That we should cease to court disaster, that we should simplify and make possible the solution of primary life-problems in the mode of freedom, should not, especially in view of the number and magnitude of disasters our species produces for itself, be an unreasonable negative principle, particularly because there appear to be no reasons why a comparatively stable and comparatively simplified society need be reduced to spinning-wheel technology or to changelessness. We might, if such a society were realized, become able at last to apply an authentic spirit of experimentation to the practical problems of life, something virtually impossible under present conditions.

Individual and Society

Anarchist conceptions of individuality and socialization can be made clearer through brief consideration of the relation between anarchist theories labelled "individualist" or "mutualist" and those labelled "communist" or "syndicalist". In these remarks I shall not encompass certain bourgeois "individualisms" that call themselves anarchist but have nothing in common with anarchism as a social movement and historic idea; for example, so-called anarcho-capitalism.

The main anarchist movements communist or syndicalist, endeavour to encompass the aspiration to socialism, so that pre doctrinal socialism could be regarded as that aspect of (generic) anarchism that is specifically concerned with the politics of production, distribution, and wealth. Individualist and mutualist anarchism, however, usually deny that community or society have even the secondary substantiality accorded to them in the communist or syndicalist versions. In the present world (it is held) society and community are fictions by which some individuals, cooperating for the purpose, justify their violent domination and exploitation of others; while what might be mistakenly regarded as community or society in a condition of true freedom would actually be no more than the sum of the unhindered actions of individuals and their associations. For individualists, the mutually advantageous cooperation of individuals would be achieved through an agreed-upon medium or principle of exchange and other conventions intended to guarantee maximally the self-sovereignty of the individual.

But it is the plain intended consequence of the individualists' proposals that the ends identified here earlier as socialist be achieved - if one regards collective ownership as but one proposed means for the abolition of classes and of kinds of property, governmentally legitimated and protected, that make possible the exploitation of person by person. The American individualist anarchist Stephen Pearl Andrews ("The Science of Society", 1848), while rejecting the forms in which democracy and socialism were usually conceived, wrote that the sovereignty of the individual represented the fulfilment of the spirit of both, and the later individualist Benjamin Tucker held that individualism was that species

of socialism which chose the way of liberty against the way of "invasive authority", to which latter, he thought, the anarchist communists, wittingly or unwittingly, succumbed. And if the principle that *every person decides* correctly expresses the communist and syndicalist versions of anarchism, the self-sovereignty dear to individualists is given full recognition.

There is however plainly a tension between thinking of a society of *free individuals* and thinking of a *society* of free individuals, particularly if in the first case "society" might better be placed in quotation marks; and to opt for one or the other is to invite practical and psychological consequences, perhaps just because one's choice reflects one's sense of what is more painfully lacking in one's world. In an ethic of individualism, with its economic corollaries, Kropotkin saw something reminiscent of capitalist apologetics for the aggressive and acquisitive and exploitative individual; in Kropotkin's visions of communism the individualists saw the absorption of the individual into a sovereign whole.

Just this tension between individualism and socialism, experienced by every anarchist movement, might be seen as rendering anarchism indecisive and ineffectual. Looked at from the standpoint of ideas, or of the search for requirements to fulfil a vision of human being, this same tension can be seen as preserving anarchism against that tendency to surrender to sovereignty of the whole, at first disguised and then overt and practically irreversible, that individualists fear in anarchist communism and which Marxist communism has again and again instantiated. (If communism and syndicalism are more than standard procedures, or institutions. in the sense of the preceding section, if they do not allow for effective choice of alternatives, they are incompatible with anarchism.) Malatesta's anarchism, which rejected hyphenation and sectarianism, sought to preserve this tension within an unqualified undivided anarchism. Until and unless the polarity of Individual and society is resolved into a world without social power, it would seem important that a movement of people and ideas directed to that end remain acutely conscious of the polarity and by one or another means preserve that tension; for it is, on the anarchist view, only in an anarchical society that individuality and sociality can cease to be in systematic conflict.

The individualism of anarchism is no doubt equivocal, especially because it must be prepared to let go ultimately what it jealously guards. But it is certainly not a bourgeois individualism, as Marxism, beginning with Marx's attack on Stirner, has represented it. In Stirner's philosophy, not called anarchist by him but generally affirmed by individualist anarchists, philosophic egoism is absolute and "others" are merely instruments for "my" satisfactions. But this egoism is precisely philosophic rather than psychological which means that egoism does not bar love of others or voluntary cooperative association (free unions). Although Stirner, a badly misunderstood philosopher if my reading of him is correct, wrote of the self-interested self and praised it, he wrote by habit in the first person plural, thus setting the problem of uniqueness as the problem of all persons and not the problem (as posed by Nietzsche later) of an elite or future Mite; he called for a general rebellion of the unique ones, all of us, in our own behalf.

The question of "the individual as basic social reality" runs deeper, however, than I have so far pursued it here, deeper indeed than I shall be able to. How this exploration might run, I shall briefly sketch. At the centre of anarchist critique of existing societies is the thesis that they are characterized by the submergence of individuals in networks of power-institutions - so that, insofar, the Marxist method of analysing past history in institutional terms is basically correct in intention, if dogmatic and oversimplifying in its standard applications. Thus the force of the statement that the individual is the ultimate social reality is normative and programmatic, and the claim is inseparable from other aspects of a complex ethical ideal of human being. Here and now, this "reality" is an incompletely realized potential.

This view of the individual does not entail Stirner's metaphysical and epistemological individualism, which can be regarded as an effort to ground a normative view in philosophy-proper. Yet, as I hope I have succeeded in at least suggesting, the affirmation of the individual does not reach its anarchist meaning, and its complete distinctness from bourgeois and other alienating conceptions of individuality, until it is thought in the context of the transcendence of power. For knowledge of that transcendence we have to rely upon our severely incomplete experi-

ence of ourselves and others in situations of love and caring and community, where the subjectivity of others is significantly present to us; about these, and about the anarchist ideal, a language of "person" may be less misleading than a language of "individual". In that context, by the hypothesis of anarchism, the individuals cease to be in systematic antagonism, and "individual" and "social" cease to be descriptive of conflict.

Such a view of the individual is not, so far as I can see, in essential conflict with a philosophy of social sciences that prefers, for what I would consider reasons of methodology, to regard relations as prior and individuals as derivative.

Nature

I have spoken only about *anthropos*, and a few tentative words, no more, about Nature and Humanity must be said. In a profound sense, anarchism is atheistic. (By atheism I mean precisely the negation of theism, not the negation of religious feeling or of spirituality.) The intense atheism of traditional anarchism would seem to be more than terrestrial in its ardour -no mere anticlericalism- and more also than negational of God as legitimator of governmental and clerical authority.

Anarchist thought gains unity if its atheism is taken as assertion that human being must establish its freedom within Nature. (By Nature I do not mean a material universe merely. Nature I understand as coextensive with what is.) Anarchism then would be expressive of universal rejection of power, in the symbol, for the case of the institutional Christian religions, of the Divine Monarch, the universal despot who, on grounds of transcendental ideology, i.e., theology, claims Man's obedience and His priority in being. Correlatively, anarchists have generally set great store, even excessive store, by science, philosophy, and reason, thereby expressing faith, I believe, that these means will enable us to achieve such understanding of Nature as will establish our freedom within it.

Unlike Marxist socialism, however, unlike Marx, "young Marx" included, anarchism is rarely anthropocentrically humanistic in the sense

of a vision of Nature as enemy, menace, object of conquest and control by technology, arena for human dominance -the inverse of theistic subjugation. I understand anarchism as affirming humankind and opposing our subordination or subjugation to either divinities or to natural laws that we do not understand and make our own - as seeking our freedom but not our dominance or our independence of Nature.

To be careful I should not say that anarchists have always been clear about these matters. The Christian context of the Western world to which anarchism has mainly been limited has not made such clarity easy. I mean to suggest that anarchism readily extrapolates, and that its spirit calls for extrapolation, to a certain vision of Nature analogous to its vision of society; where individual persons, human societies, and the human species, live in relationship with other individual beings and species, affirming our being our creative uniqueness, and our freedom, but not seeking a supremacy that would signify an alienation of humankind in antagonism to what we cannot control or understand. Thus the harmony of society and person can be transposed to the larger case, and anarchism gains force and scope and completion insofar as it stands for such harmony of persons and world.

Whether only contingently, because anarchism took root mainly outside Germanic Europe, or for more essential reasons, anarchism does not much reflect that Feuerbachian humanism, according to which the God-idea is merely a projection of human ideals, that Marx adopted and by which he disposed easily of the religious question, with the consequence, one might speculate, that Nature lost its sacredness, without which it is difficult if not impossible that human beings be sacred to themselves. For anarchism, perhaps more Catholic than Protestant in its religious background and sources, God has had a more serious reality than for Marx - reality as image of power, as pretended reality of power. One may not be mistaken -but one may be- in thinking that the angry rebellion of anarchist against the God of the Christian churches has represented a profound and thwarted spirituality.

In contemporary anarchist literature, the theme of atheism is less conspicuous, less urgent - perhaps because our cosmic freedom has been

gained, but in the mode of independence and dominance, or in the mode of illusion of freedom, and our problem is rather one of rediscovering our being in Nature, a different religious problem than that of the God-monarch.

Anarchism as Social Philosophy

The chief thing that I have wanted to show is that anarchism represents a fundamental ideal of human existence: that it represents something other than mere absence of government, something other than the freedom to do anything one wants, something different than a freedom limited by what will harm others. It represents instead the aim of social union, on a ground of unique individuality, where no class or caste divisions exist between people and where integral individuality and integral society, non-antithetical, have become two aspects of the same life. The deepest meaning of this anarchist freedom, if I see rightly the implications of what I have written, is that certain significant barriers to the realization of potentialities of human being will have been broken. Integral individuality and integral society are ancient as well as modern values, and every system of ethics and social philosophy could be said to have endeavoured to accommodate them to each other. I suggested that anarchism is a social idea of importance, and not merely a peculiar kind of member in the series "tyranny, monarchy, oligarchy, democracy... anarchy", because it claims to identify, in power, the missing clue. It presents both a conception of general and ultimate social/personal harmony, which may well turn out to be an ideal beyond reach, and a conception of social/personal harmony in any circumscribed realm, any relatively closed human "system", as small as the sphere of one's immediate life-circle, where the negation of Ideologically justified, socially divisive patterns of domination are (by hypothesis) a necessary condition for social/personal harmony. As a practical goal, the "free society" can hardly recommend itself for its probability, whatever exactly probability means in such matters; but the Idea reflects itself, sometimes as a secular philosophy of love, into the daily life of persons who derive from it their values.

If we are to discuss anarchism as a "social philosophy", we will want it to

be more than a set of "feelings" at the core of an "Idea", and something more than an abstract resolution of power-and powerlessness. During the course of this article I have set down a number of propositions, beyond the initial propositions of the first sections, which I would like to recapitulate here:

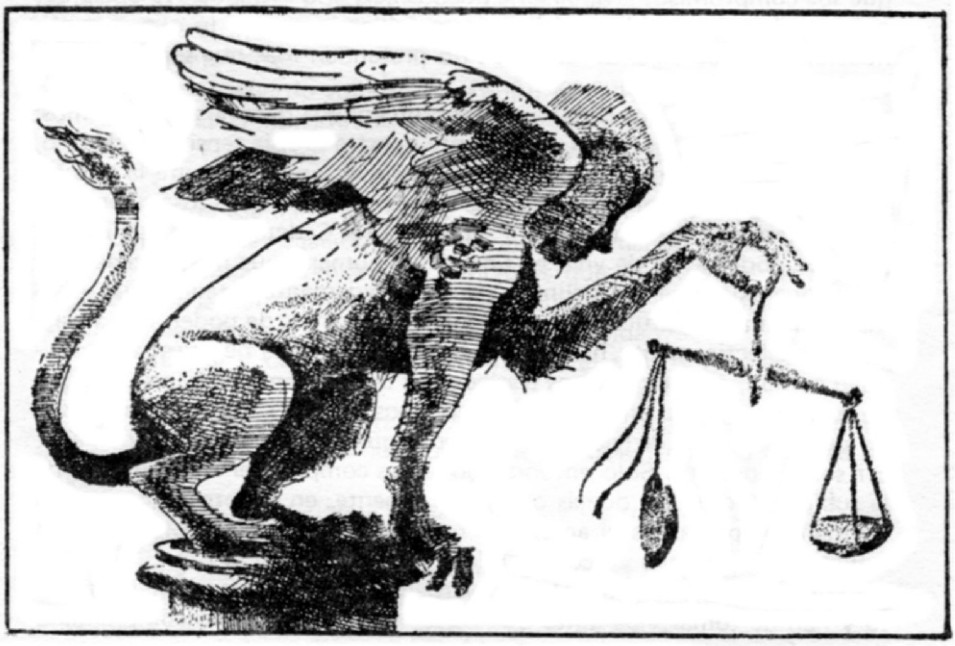
- That the individual is the fundamental social (but not necessarily metaphysical) reality;
- That voluntary agreement is the foundation of cooperation;
- That everyone is responsible for their actions;
- That general freedom depends on the self-discipline of each;
- That the assumption of power or submission to power in any sphere is negation of the fundamental human reality;
- That a morality of principles that apply the theme of power negation affirms the free development of individuality as the condition of realizing our sense of humanity;
- That faith and trust toward persons is the vital ethical centre of anarchy;
- That anarchism represents and demands a transcendence of power/powerlessness that can be described as integral freedom;
- That the alternative to the sovereignty of collectivities is "every person decides";
- That power is the root evil of human being;
- That integral freedom is immanent in human life and history as an always realizable potentiality;
- That freedom is the reversal of the substitution of Institutional definition, institutional being, institutional will, for oneself;
- That the breakdown of sovereignties prepares the way for liberation from the determinism of history;
- That "individual" and "society" are dynamic tensions that find their ground of union in freedom;
- That the "program" of action is the continuous realization of freedom in the lives of each and all;
- That individuals are the energy of social change as well as the foundation of free society;
- That in the continuous realization of freedom, values are won continuously.

About these propositions I wish to claim that they indicate a non-simplistic view of society and human being that provides a mode of social analysis, an image of the ethical potentiality of man, and a proposal of method for realizing that potentiality.

If one is to consider anarchism as a "philosophy", one will of course ask about the nature of metaphysical and epistemological commitments and their foundation. This question threatens to reintroduce the fragmentation into "schools" that I have sought to overcome, for on these questions anarchist differ sharply and I have chosen to view anarchism in a way that avoids such commitments. I should like now, however, to give a positive sense to this avoidance, and I offer the following thoughts, intended to be no more than suggestive; their elaboration will have to await another occasion.

We are a puzzle to ourselves, I believe, because we do not fully experience our own humanity, and this in turn is because we cannot fully experience the humanity of others so long as we exist in the many interlocking relations of master hood and servitude. We yield to those structures of power in order to live in a human world that pre-exists each of us and demands that we discipline ourselves to cultures organized around Insignia, languages, persons, institutions, mythologies, and philosophies of power. We move dialectically to a plane of consciousness of our common humanity, instantiated uniquely in each person, as we move dialectically to a plane of social existence in which we wield no power over others and do not allow ourselves to be determined in our being by the power that they wield. Only then do we realize the meaning of subjectivity in another or, authentically, in ourselves. By that move, we bring love to reality, for such recognition of subjectivity is what I understand by love.

Put otherwise: Certain truths must be brought to be, must be made living, before their meaning can be apprehended more than negatively. (Thus anarchism, in this respect like Marxism, transposes the philosophical questions into questions of actualization and realization.) What I see in anarchism is the indication that human being will become adequately self-conscious, and therefore free toward the future, and dichotomies of

thought and action will dissolve, only when human beings free themselves from one another and, in certain significant senses, from themselves.

Thus anarchism can be seen as proceeding from the hypothesis that there is a negative task to be accomplished before we can genuinely experience ourselves as human beings and grasp our relationships to one another. Throughout, therefore, anarchism is, ideationally, essentially negative. Whereas with respect to particular social problems this would be a gross defect, anarchism is concerned with a far more fundamental kind of question, and from its vision of the potentialities residing in our actual human situation its thoroughgoing negativity would seem to follow and to be the foundation of creation.