Resisting the Nation State. The pacifist and anarchist tradition

Geoffrey Ostergaard

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Introduction

'The nation-state', writes A D Smith, 'is the norm of modern political organisation...It is the almost unquestioned foundation of world order, the main object of individual loyalties, the chief definer of a man's identity...It permeates our outlook so much that we hardly question its legitimacy today.' (1)

To most readers, Smith's generalisations may appear as statements of the obvious. But it would be a mistake to suppose that the legitimacy of the nation state has never been seriously questioned or even that it is not so questioned today. The strong tide that has flowed in the direction of the nation state has been resisted from the start, and this essay looks at two traditions of political thought and action which have been 'against the current'.

The first, pacifism, may be seen as the ideology and movement that has resisted an institution closely related to the development of the nation-state: it challenges the right of the state to engage in, and conscript its citizens for, war. The nature of this challenge is exemplified in the statement issued by the No Conscription Fellowship, the British organisation of conscientious objectors to military service in the First World War. Affirming their belief in the sacredness of human life, its members, the statement declared, 'deny the right of governments to say, "You shall bear arms"...They will, whatever the consequences, obey their conscientious convictions rather than the commands of governments.' (2)

The second, anarchism, is even more radical: it challenges not merely the nation state's right to make war, but also its very right to exist. The central thrust of anarchism is directed against all the core elements that make up the nation state: its territoriality with the accompanying notion of frontiers; its sovereignty, implying exclusive jurisdiction over all people and property within those frontiers; its monopolistic control of the major means of physical force by which it upholds that sovereignty, both internally and externally; its system of positive law which overrides all other law and custom, and which implies that rights exist only if sanctioned by the state; and finally, the element that was added last — the idea of the nation as the paramount political community.

Pacifism, Pacificism and Anti-Militarism

In discussing pacifism some clarification of terms is necessary. The word 'pacifist' was coined (as recently as 1901) to refer to all those who opposed war and worked to create or maintain peace between nations. This broad sense of the term is still current, but in Anglo-American usage, 'pacifist' has the narrower meaning in which it refers to those whose opposition to war takes the form of refusing personally to take part in it or support it. Such persons, for reasons which will become clear, have also usually opposed all overt violence between human beings, though not necessarily the covert violence, usually referred to as 'force', the kind used by police. 'Pacificist' is perhaps the more appropriate term to convey the broader meaning. 'Pacificists' may support the use of military forces in 'peace-keeping' operations, whereas 'pacificists' are generally 'anti-militarists'. However, not all anti-militarists are pacifists. Historically, anti-militarism is associated with the belief that most modern wars are fought in the interests of ruling classes, such as feudal lords or capitalists. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, before socialist parties controlled any states, many socialists were anti-militarists and some socialist leaders, such as

Keir Hardie, were also pacifists. The socialist anti-militarist might, if he were not a pacifist, when war broke out, join the army in the hope that thereby he could speed the downfall of capitalism, perhaps by spreading disaffection among the troops and persuading them, if a revolutionary situation arose, to use their weapons against their class enemies. In practice, 'pacificism', 'pacifism' and 'anti-militarism' often overlap, but the terms do stand for fairly distinct orientations.

Sectarian Origins of Pacifism

The intellectual origins of Western pacifism are firmly rooted in the beliefs of religious sects. The first of these sects was made up of the followers of Jesus who, in the Sermon on the Mount, preached a new message: 'Ye have heard that it hath been said: An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also…Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you.' (3) These words express the doctrine of 'nonresistance to evil', and for several centuries, while awaiting the Second Coming of Christ, his followers accepted the plain implications of the message. They refused military service while otherwise, at the same time, in St Paul's words, rendering unto Caesar his due. The eclipse of early Christian pacifism came with the conversion of Constantine who, in 313 AD, made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire. With the sect transformed into a church allied to the state, St Augustine enunciated a new doctrine: the clergy were to be totally dedicated to God and to live accordingly, but the laity were to fulfil the normal obligations of subjects. He also developed the doctrine of 'the just war' which later, in the 13th century, St Thomas Aquinas elaborated.

In the late Middle Ages several heretical sects, notably the Waldensians, the Cathari, and the Czech Brethren of the Law of Christ, challenged the new orthodoxy, and espoused pacifist ideas. But the real beginning of modern pacifism dates from the Reformation of the 16th century, which marked a victory for the nascent modern state over the Catholic Church. Unlike Luther, various radical supporters of the Reformation in Switzerland, Germany and the Netherlands, who came to be known as the Anabaptists, called for an unqualified return to the teachings of Jesus. In the 'Schleitheim Confession of Faith', 1527, they argued that it was not possible to reconcile the way of Christ with the way of the world. Until the coming of Christ's Kingdom, a true Christian must be a 'nonconformist'. The sword, symbolising state power, was ordained by God, but 'ordained outside the perfection of Christ'. The secular political authorities formed part of the unregenerate world and existed only because people did not follow Christ's teachings and needed to be coerced. True Christians needed no coercion, should not coerce others, and should, as far as possible, effect a separation from the abomination. (4)

Accordingly — except for one group who attempted by force to establish the Kingdom of God on earth in the city of Munster in 1534–5 and who, for their pains, were bloodily repressed — the Anabaptists abstained from politics, refused to bear arms or serve as policemen, refrained from lawsuits and the taking of oaths, and declined to recognise the existing laws of property. One group, the Hutterites, proceeded to establish communist communities, 150 of which continue to exist to this day in the USA and Canada. (5) Subjected to severe persecution for heresy, many other groups rallied under the leadership of Menno Simons (1496–1561), and it is as 'Mennonites' that they are now generally known.

The Anabaptist strategy of withdrawal from the unregenerate world was not followed by the Puritans who gathered round George Fox in the England of the 1650s to form the Society of Friends, or Quakers. They aimed to Christianise the world and to establish a 'realm of the saints'. Believing that God exists in every person, they stressed the importance of the Inner Light as the guide for living. After some initial uncertainty about the use of violence, they issued in 1661 the Declaration which became the basis of their 'peace testimony'. It stated firmly: 'All bloody Principles and Practices we (as to our own particular) do utterly deny, with all outward wars and strife and fightings with outward weapons, for any end, or under any pretext whatsoever...' (6) Pacifism was only one of the peculiarities of the Quakers, but it became their most distinguishing mark. It was in America, where some had gone in search of religious freedom, that Quakers were given the first opportunity to apply their principles in politics: 'the Holy Experiment' in nonviolent government in Pennsylvania, which lasted from 1662 to 1756.

Early in the 18th century, the radical wing of German Pietism gave birth to two new pacifist sects: the Dunkers and the Inspirationists, both of which emigrated to America. The Dunkers, now known as the Church of the Brethren, constitute the third of the 'historic peace churches' of the USA. They were followed later by the Shakers who, like the Hutterites, combined pacifism with voluntary communism. The pacifism of these sects was 'separational', not 'integrational' like that of the Quakers (7). A rather different kind of pacifism — 'eschatological' — was displayed by several sects formed in the 19th century, whose doctrines centre on a belief in the imminence of the Day of Judgement when the godless will be destroyed, after which Christ will reign as King over the faithful in a new world. These sects include the Plymouth Brethren, the Christadelphians, the Seventh Day Adventists, and Jehovah's Witnesses. Eschatological pacifism does not reject warfare as such. Wars may be seen as God's way of punishing the wicked and, while adherents should not take part in earthly wars, they may, when the time comes, take up arms in the final battle of Armageddon.

The pacifism of the sects has undergone attrition over the years. Thus, the majority of American Quakers and Brethren of military age served in the Second World War. (8) But, until the twentieth century, the pacifist ethic of Jesus was largely preserved by these fundamentalists. Christian pacifists are now represented in other churches. In the present century there has been a significant growth of pacifist sentiment among Methodists in Britain and Baptists in the USA and, more recently, among Catholics. The Fellowship of Reconciliation, founded in 1914, seeks to unite all who base their pacifism on Christian grounds.

Pacificism and the Peace Movement

From the 16th century onwards, it is also possible to trace the development of the broader pacificist tradition which focuses on changing modes of statecraft in order to reduce or eliminate war. Erasmus (1466–1536), although a theologian who accepted 'the just war' doctrine, roundly condemned war on humanitarian rather than religious grounds. In the 17th and 18th centuries this line of thought led to a series of proposals to establish permanent peace between states though some form of international organisation: the 'peace plans' of Cruce (1623), Penn (1693), Saint-Pierre (1713), Bentham (1789), and Kant (1795). The motivation of the last two was clearly secular and rationalistic, expressing the conviction shared by many philosophers of the Enlightenment that war was irrational and contradicted the ideal of human brotherhood.

Mainly through the efforts of individual Quakers, an organised peace movement came into being on both sides of the Atlantic immediately after the Napoleonic Wars. Its main thrust is indicated in the aims of the American Peace Society: 'to increase and promote the practice already begun of submitting national differences to amicable discussion and arbitration, and...of settling all national controversies by an appeal to reason...This shall be done by a Congress of Nations...Then wars will cease.' (9) Throughout its chequered course, although it has usually had a radical wing and pacifists have played a prominent part in it, the peace movement has been predominantly moderate and liberal in character. It has accepted the nation-state system but sought to make it more rational. In the 19th century its liberal character was strengthened by association with the Manchester School, represented by Cobden and Bright, which held that the solution to the problem of war lay through the promotion of free trade between nations. In the 20th century the pacificism of the peace movement has contributed to the thinking that led to the League of Nations and the United Nations, the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928 outlawing war, and efforts to promote disarmament.

Conscription and the Nation State

In one sense pacificism provides an alternative to the more uncomfortable pacifism that demands personal witness against war. After heresy hunting had abated with the growth of religious toleration, pacifism certainly became a more difficult stance to maintain as the concept of the nation-state developed. In the era of state-building from the Reformation to the French Revolution, as distinct from the era of the nation-state, wars were fought mainly by professional armies, often largely composed of mercenaries. There was no universal conscription for military service. Instead, there was the militia system under which able-bodied men could be mustered for military training and operations, usually on a local basis and for limited periods. At the same time, legal privilege for various groups and estates was a feature of political systems. In this situation, governments tended to deal with their pacifist subjects in an ad hoc way, applying the notion of legal privilege. In some instances, as in Rhode Island in 1673, all whose conscience forbade them to bear arms were exempted from militia service. In other instances, exemption was given to specified sects, a procedure adopted by the Empress Catherine in 1776 as an inducement to Mennonites to settle in Russia. Sometimes exemption was granted in return for payment of a military tax, or a pacifist called up for militia service was permitted to provide a hired substitute. More commonly, failure to perform the required military duties attracted a fine, and failure to pay led to sequestration of property in lieu or a short jail sentence.

All this began to change when the state came to be seen as based on the nation. Subjects were transformed into citizens, all equal before the law, members of a single national community sharing in its beliefs and burdens. One consequence was the introduction of compulsory military service for all adult males, usually in time of peace as well as war. Bayonets were thrust into the hands of citizens often before they were given the ballot. Service in defence of the nation came to be seen as a sacred civic duty and was sometimes linked to the definition of citizenship. Revolutionary France, 'the first nation in arms', paved the way in 1793. Prussia followed suit in 1808. Since then compulsory military service has become the norm throughout the world. In 1966, only 7 of 140 states did not impose it. (10)

Conscription laws, when first introduced, usually made no provision for exempting pacifists. Those refusing military service were treated as deserters, imprisoned and sometimes shot. When conscription was introduced in Russia in 1874, the exemption granted to Mennonites 'in perpetuity' was withdrawn, leading thousands to emigrate to the USA. In 1875 the Government relented and allowed them to serve in hospitals as an alternative, but the concession applied to no other sect. When in 1895 some 10,000 Doukhobors announced their refusal to bear arms, they were severely dealt with. Tolstoy then publicised their plight and funds were raised to enable the sect to emigrate to Canada. (11)

The CO Formula

As a mode of accommodating pacifists within the nation state, the Conscientious Objector formula was gradually evolved and grudgingly applied. In effect, by this formula the state recognises that pacifists are 'peculiar persons' who may, in return for their recognising the state's right to conscript its citizens for war, be accorded a special status to which penalties are attached. In applying the formula, states have usually insisted that applicants show their objection arises out of religious belief and that they object to war in any form — the latter a condition which Jehovah's Witnesses, who also claim exemption as ministers, have found hard to meet. If applicants pass the test, then they may be directed to perform either non-combatant service in the army or alternative civilian work of 'national importance'. The formula has resulted in dividing pacifists between 'absolutists' — those who refuse all compromise — and 'registrants' (and, among the latter, between those willing to accept noncombatant service and those willing to accept only alternative civilian service). It has also led to confusion between Conscientious Objection as a moral and as a legal category. From the state's point of view, absolutists are not COs, but lawbreakers. It is, of course, absolutists who have posed the most direct challenge to the state's authority, and it is significant that draft evaders have usually been treated more leniently. Those pacifists, relatively few, who have accepted non-combatant service, and the larger number who have accepted alternative civilian service, seem often to have wished to show that, in every respect save their willingness to kill at the state's behest, they were loyal citizens.

The statistics of Conscientious Objection during the two World Wars in Britain and the USA — the countries where pacifism has been strongest — show how much it has been a minority movement. In the First World War, the number of COs in Britain is estimated to have been 16,100, while in the USA there were 64,693 applications for noncombatant service. (12) In the Second World War, some 60,000 men and 1,000 women applied for CO registration in Britain, while in the USA the total number of COs is estimated to have been about 100,000 — the latter figure representing 0.3 per cent of the 34 million who registered for military service. (13) In both countries, the clash between conscience and law was less dramatic in the Second than in the First World War, when absolutists were often harshly treated. In part, this reflected greater toleration of COs, but also a greater willingness of COs to co-operate with the authorities — as did the historic peace churches in the USA who sponsored and managed Civilian Public Service camps for the alternativists.

The CO formula has been liberalised since it was first adopted. Thus in the USA the religious test has been dropped, and ethical as opposed to religious objection recognised. The issue of 'selective objection', i.e. to particular wars, first raised by socialists in the First World War, became increasingly important in the context of the agitation against the Vietnam War in the 1960s,

(14) which was marked also by the burning of draft cards and widespread draft evasion. But in most nation states the issue is not liberalisation of the formula. Rather, it is whether pacifists are recognised at all. Thus, in Russia, where at the turn of the century lived several million sectarian pacifists, officially there is now none, this being the Soviet Government's explanation of why the Universal Military Service Law of 1939 contained no provision for COs. The Soviet Union, however, is not alone in this. In 1968, only 16 of 140 states had any such legal provision, although the number has increased slightly since then.

Conscientious objection to military service, whether recognised by states or not, remains, and is likely to remain, an important aspect of pacifism. To refuse to bear arms links contemporary pacifists with their forbears and provides a clear expression of their witness to truth. But, as a policy for achieving peace, it has obvious limitations, and as a way of defining pacifism it has come increasingly to be seen by many pacifists as inadequate. The tendency to equate pacifism with conscientious objection was probably most marked in the inter-war years when intellectuals like Einstein, before the menace of Fascism made him change his mind, argued that war could be prevented if a sufficiently large proportion of the male population pledged itself to refuse to fight. It was in line with this way of thinking that, in Britain, Canon Dick Sheppard founded the Peace Pledge Union which, by 1939, had enrolled over 100,000 members, each of whom had signed the declaration: 'I renounce war and never again, directly or indirectly, will I support or sanction another'.

As a moral stance, at least from the perspective of Christian ethics, pacifism is unassailable. But it can be argued that much pacifist and most pacificist thought has been vitiated by a tendency to view war and, more generally, violence in a highly abstract way, divorced from the structures in which they are embedded. Until recently, pacifists have been slow to recognise that modern war is inherent in the system of sovereign nation states, that war is the use of armed force by states or by those who aspire to build or control states, and that war is not an aberration or sickness but, in Randolph Bourne's words, 'the health of the state'. Rousseau, who edited an edition of Saint-Pierre's peace plan, grasped clearly the central point: war is a function of the state and has its origins in 'the social compact' that gives rise to the state. 'If the social compact could be severed at a stroke, at once there would be no more war. At a stroke the state would be killed, without a single man having to die.' (15) Rousseau did not think that the social compact could be severed, but there have been those who thought otherwise.

Anarchism as a Social Movement

One such was Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809–65), the first man to use the term 'anarchy' as the defiant, but literal description of his ideal of a society without government. The classical anarchist movement, which he initially inspired and which was further developed by Michael Bakunin (1814–76) and Peter Kropotkin (1842–1921), formed an integral, if contentious part of the wider socialist movement from the 1840s to 1939. Classical anarchism can also be seen as at the centre of one of three broad schools of socialist thought, distinguished by their attitude to the state: Libertarian Socialism, Marxian Communism and Social Democracy. Whereas the control of state power is central, in different ways, to the strategy of the last two, libertarian socialism seeks to achieve its goals by direct voluntary action of the people themselves. Its thrust is either non-statist or anti-statist, and the action may be wholly peaceful or sometimes violent. His-

torically, in both Britain and France, libertarian socialism was the first to emerge. Thus, the first British socialists, inspired by Robert Owen (1771–1858), sought to establish by peaceful voluntary action a 'new moral world' which would completely replace competitive capitalism. They envisaged a world-wide system — one of Owen's organisations was grandly called The Association of All Classes of All Nations — made up of small scale, self-sufficient communist communities, loosely linked together for purposes of mutual aid and exchange of surpluses. In the process of establishing this system, the 'old immoral world' with its antagonisms, states and wars, would be sloughed off. In France, the followers of Fourier shared a similar vision. This kind of communitarian socialism later found substantial expression in 19th century America and in the Israeli kibbutzim, and has surfaced again in the recent commune movement. From Owenite socialism also developed the modern Co-operative Movement which, throughout the 19th century, sought to build the Cooperative Commonwealth. In the 20th century, lowering its sights and usually in alliance with Social Democracy, it has settled for the voluntary socialisation of a sector of the national economy.

Proudhon's socialism, called mutualism, was essentially co-operative in character, envisaging workers and peasants, either individually or in groups, organising production in their own workshops and fields, financed by free credit from a People's Bank. But, unlike Owen and Fourier, he did not ignore the state. Rather, he insisted that the proletariat could not emancipate itself through the use of state power. Bakunin, who emerged as Marx's main rival in the First International, 1864–72, made the point more forcibly: 'I am not a communist, because communism concentrates and swallows up in itself for the benefit of the State all the forces of society. I want the abolition of the State…I want to see collective or social property organised from below upwards, not from above downwards, by means of any kind of authority whatever…' (16)

In its Bakuninist phase, the anarchist movement favoured a revolutionary strategy in which the oppressed classes, peasants as well as industrial workers, would rise in popular insurrections, expropriate the means of production, and abolish the state. Kropotkin, who developed the theory of anarchist-communism, also favoured this strategy. In place of the state would emerge the autonomous commune, federally linked with other communes at regional, national and international levels.

The uprising of the Paris Commune of 1871 approximated to this anarchist model of revolution. Its crushing strengthened the tendency towards State Socialism, whether of the Marxist or Social Democratic variety. It also led some anarchists to adopt the tactic of 'propaganda by the deed' — acts of assassination of political leaders and terrorism of the bourgeoisie — intended to encourage popular insurrections. 'The dark angels' of anarchism who performed these acts are largely responsible for the popular but misleading stereotype of the anarchist.

The consequent repression of the movement led other anarchists to develop an alternative syndicalist strategy. The idea was to turn trade unions into revolutionary instruments of class struggle and make them, rather than the communes, the basic units of a socialist order. The revolution would take the form of a General Strike in the course of which the unions would take over the means of production and abolish the state. In place of the sovereign, territorial nation states, there would be 'industrial republics' organised on functional lines with sovereignty divided between unions and federations of unions at all levels. It was through syndicalism that anarchism exercised its greatest influence on labour and socialist movements in Europe and the USA in the period 1890–1920. The influence lasted longer in Spain where, during the Civil War,

1936–39, the anarcho-syndicalists attempted, with some short-lived success, to carry through their conception of revolution.

Anarchism as a Tradition of Political Thought

Considered as a tradition of political thought, however, anarchism is more complex than its manifestation in the classical anarchist movement might suggest. From this perspective, anarchism appears to be as closely related to liberalism as it is to socialism. Indeed, one form of anarchism, individualist, may be seen as liberalism taken to its extreme — some would say — logical conclusion. Individualist, as distinct from socialist, anarchism has been particularly strong in the USA from the time of Josiah Warren (1798–1874) onwards and is expressed today by Murray Rothbard and the school of 'anarcho-capitalists'. Individualist anarchism emphasises individual liberty, conscience, individuality, and the uniqueness of each person — the latter brilliantly expressed by Max Stirner (1805–56) in *The Ego and His Own*. Often, as with William Godwin (1756–1836), it leads to a distrust of any kind of enduring cooperation with others, such relations constraining the exercise of what Godwin called the individual's 'private judgement'. In their economic ideas, individualists have usually insisted on the importance of individual production, private property or possession, praised the free market and condemned the iniquity of all monopolies. Their central political principle is 'the sovereignty of the individual'. Taken seriously, this principle is sufficient to explain their rejection of the state and of any government other than 'voluntary government' based on the consent of each and every individual. Their vision is vividly expressed in Shelley's poetic translation of Godwin's philosophy in *Prometheus Unbound*:

> *The loathsome mask has fallen, but man remains*
> *Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, but man*
> *Equal, unclassed, tribeless and nationless,*
> *Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king*
> *Over himself; just, gentle, wise...*

However, the difference between individualist and social anarchism, though important, should not be exaggerated. The economic proposals of most individualists are intended to secure to each person the fruits of his or her own labour, not the accumulation of possessions through the exploitation of the labour of others. On the other hand, even anarchist-communists are imbued with a strong sense of individuality. And both types of anarchism rest firmly on liberal intellectual foundations.

Society and the State

Fundamental in liberal thought is the distinction between Society and the State which, in turn, is related to the distinction made by ancient Greek philosophers between nature and convention. The distinction is expressed by John Locke (1632–1704), the key figure in modern liberalism, in a contrast between 'the State of Nature' and 'civil' or 'political' society. In the state of nature all Men are free and equal, and no one has the authority to command the obedience of others. But

the state of nature is not, as Hobbes has argued, a lawless condition of strife; it does constitute a society, since it is regulated by national law from which derive Men's natural rights. Nevertheless, 'inconveniences', principally the absence of a common judge when disputes arise, do exist; and these lead Men by way of a social contract to set up political societies. In this view, the state is an artificial or conventional device, with the strictly limited and negative function of safeguarding people's natural rights. Despotism, Locke insists, is worse than 'the natural condition of mankind'.

Locke's notion that a natural order exists independently of the state provides a theoretical underpinning of the classical liberal defence of laissez-faire and limited government. In *The Rights of Man*, 1792, Tom Paine elaborates the notion: *'Great part of that order which reigns among mankind is not the effect of government. It has its origins in the principles of society and the natural constitution of men. It existed prior to government and would exist if the formality of government was abolished. The mutual dependence and reciprocal interest which man has upon man, and all the parts of civilised community upon each other, create that great chain of connexion which holds it together. The landholder, the farmer, the manufacturer, the merchant, the tradesman, and every occupation, prospers by the aid which each receives from the other, and from the whole. Common interest regulates their concerns and forms their law; and the laws which common usage ordains, have a greater influence than the laws of government.'* (17)

From Paine's position it is but a short step to Godwin's conclusion in *Political Justice* (1793), (18) that government — deemed by Paine 'a necessary evil' — can be dispensed with. The step is reached by postulating 'the perfectibility of man', by which Godwin meant, not that men are perfect or will ever become so, but that they are capable of indefinite moral improvement.

Political Justice is rightly deemed the first systematic exposition of anarchism. But, interestingly, its main conclusion was anticipated in an early, allegedly satirical, work of Edmund Burke, *The Vindication of Natural Society* (1756). (18) Its title splendidly expresses the positive thrust of anarchism and the book introduces several themes taken up by anarchists: the close association between war and the state; the division of mankind into separate states as a major source of hatred and dissension; the inhumanity that flows from national prejudices; the despotic nature of all forms of government; the function of positive law in protecting the rich and the powerful against the poor and the oppressed; and the Machiavellian nature of all statecraft. Burke also poses the great anarchist question: Who will guard the guardians themselves? — the one which prompted William Morris to declare that 'No man is good enough to be another man's master'.

The idea of natural society runs like a golden thread through all anarchist thought. That mankind has always lived in society, is naturally social and sociable, and is endowed with all the attributes necessary to live harmoniously without political regulation is the basic premise of anarchism. The idea is most fully elaborated in Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid* (1902); (20) in another work, *Modern Science and Anarchism* (1913), he describes the anarchist concept of society thus: *'in society in which all the mutual relations of its members are regulated, not by laws, not by authorities, whether self-imposed or elected, but by mutual arrangements between the members of that society, and by a sum of social customs and habits — not petrified by law, routine, or superstition, but continually developing and continually readjusted, in accordance with the ever-growing requirements of a free life...No government of man by man; no crystallization and immobility, but a continual evolution — such as we see in Nature.'* (21)

The phrasing suggests a vision of the future, but Kropotkin makes clear that such a society in some degree already exists. The point is vividly made by Colin Ward in *Anarchy in Action*

(1973); *'an anarchist society...which organises itself without authority, is always in existence like a seed beneath the snow, buried under the weight of the state and its bureaucracy, capitalism and its waste, privilege and its injustices, nationalism and its suicidal loyalties, religious differences and their superstitious separatism...Far from being a speculative vision of a future society, it is a description of a mode of organisation, rooted in the experience of everyday life, which operates side by side with, and in spite of, the dominant authoritarian trends of our society.'* (22)

The Anarchist View of the State

Natural society provides the starting point for the anarchist view of the state. For all anarchists, the essence of the state is coercive power — 'organised violence'. Again, it is Kropotkin who provides the best analysis. (23) For him, as for Herder, the state must be explained historically but cannot be justified morally. Distinguishing between State and Government — terms often used interchangeably by many anarchists and others — he suggests that *'The State not only includes a power placed above society, but also a territorial concentration of many or even all functions of the life of society in the hands of a few.'* (24) In this sense, the state is a form of organisation that has developed at various times in history. The general pattern of development has been from the tribe — the first form of human society — to the more or less autonomous village commune, based on communal possession of land; then came the free cities, and finally the state. For Kropotkin, the empires of the ancient world represented the statist phase of separate movements towards civilisation in the different regions of the world; and each time the phase ended disastrously in the collapse of the civilisation. In Europe, on the ruins of the Roman Empire, civilisation began anew. Barbarian tribes slowly elaborated their institutions, and the village commune was developed. European civilisation remained at this stage until the 12th century when rose *'the Republican cities which produced the glorious expansion of the human mind, attested by the monuments of architecture, the grand development of the arts, the discoveries that laid the basis of natural sciences.'* (25) Then, in the 16th century, the modern state began to develop, destroying in the process the village commune and free federations of cities, such as the Hanseatic League. At the centre of state-building was the monarch and, around the throne, soldier-lords, lawyers, and priests formed a 'triple alliance' to dominate society in the alleged interests of society. This alliance, joined later by the capitalists, proceeded to centralise power, destroying traditional bonds of union among men, obstructing the development of local initiative, crushing existing liberties, and preventing their restoration. The advent of democracy, symbolised by the theoretical relocation of sovereignty from the person of the monarch to the people as a whole, had not halted this trend. On the contrary, centralisation had been enhanced by the insistence of modern radicals, from the Jacobins to the State Socialists, that only the state can redress the grievances of its subjects. Thus universal suffrage had proved to be what Proudhon had foreseen — the great instrument of counter-revolution. The masses had been persuaded to co-operate in the building of their own prison.

The analysis brings out one difference between liberals and anarchists. While liberals believe in some kind of balance between state and society, anarchists believe that no such balance can be maintained and that the logic of the state, unless resisted, leads to the complete domination of society by the state — to what later writers have called 'the total state' (of which 'the totalitarian state' is simply the most extreme, or pathological, form). Kropotkin's idea that the statist phases

of past civilisations have ended disastrously is also suggestive that now, eighty years on, super-states have armed themselves with H-Bombs and other weapons of mass destruction.

The Anarchist View of the Nation and of Nationalism

But missing from the analysis are the concepts of the nation and of nationalism. In part, this reflects the basic cosmopolitan outlook of anarchism. Natural society is first and foremost a condition of mankind, and anarchists, like the ancient Stoics, see themselves primarily as 'citizens of the world'. As such, anarchists have vigorously attacked what Godwin called 'the deceitful principle' of patriotism and have been the staunchest proponents of internationalism or, more strictly, transnationalism. (26) But, living as they did in the century of European nationalism, Proudhon, Bakunin and Kropotkin all addressed themselves seriously to the questions raised by it. In general, they supported national liberation struggles as part of the wider struggle for freedom, but opposed the statist aspirations of the nationalists. Thus, Bakunin argued that nationality is 'a natural fact' and each nationality has 'an incontestable right to free existence and development'; but because it lacks 'the power of universality' and is exclusionist in tendency, nationality cannot be accepted as a political principle. (27) Organising themselves from below upwards, on the federal and functional lines suggested by Proudhon, the masses would decide for themselves any divisions between nationalities; and he was confident that the proletariat, unlike the bourgeoisie, would recognise none of the frontiers associated with the claims of states.

But it is Rudolph Rocker (1873–1958) who, in *Nationalism and Culture* (1937), provides the fullest anarchist discussion of nationalism. To Rocker it is clear that *'The nation is not the cause, but the result of the state. It is the state which creates the nation and not the nation the state.'* (28) This assertion becomes more plausible when he proceeds to distinguish between a 'people' — what Proudhon had called a 'folk-group' — and a 'nation'. *'A people'*, he explains, *'is the natural result of social union, a mutual association of men brought about by a certain similarity of external conditions of living, a common language, and special characteristics due to climate and geographic environment. In this manner arise certain common traits, alive in every member of the union, and forming a most important part of its social existence. The nation, on the other hand, is the artificial struggle for political power, just as nationalism has never been anything but the political religion of the modern state. Belonging to a nation is never determined, as is belonging to a people, by profound natural causes; it is always subject to political considerations and based on those reasons of state behind which the interests of privileged minorities always reside.'* And in a passage relevant to the manifestation in recent years of both *'sub-nationalisms'* and the nascent *'supra-nationalism'* of some ideologists of the EEC, Rocker insists: *'A people is always a community with narrow boundaries. But a nation, as a rule, encompasses a whole array of different peoples and groups of peoples who have by more or less violent means been pressed into the frame of a common state.'* *'National states'* (he concludes) *'are political church organisations...All nationalism is reactionary in its nature, for it strives to enforce on the separate parts of the great human family a definite character according to a preconceived idea...Nationalism creates artificial separations and partitions within that organic unity which finds its expression in the genus Man.'*

Anarchism and Violence

The concept of natural society also helps to explain the ambiguous and ambivalent attitude towards violence in the anarchist tradition. The state seen as 'organised violence' is the antithesis of natural society, and it would therefore seem logical that anarchists should reject all violence. Many anarchists, particularly individualists and those adopting a co-operative or communitarian approach, have drawn this conclusion. But most mainstream anarchists from Bakunin onwards have not. With rare exceptions, such as Kropotkin who supported the Allies in the First World War, they have opposed all wars between states and taken a leading part in anti-militarist agitations; but they have not rejected violence in principle and, on occasions, have participated in civil wars (in Russia and Spain) and even raised anarchist armies, as well as joined insurrections and conducted 'propaganda by the deed'. In part, this may be explained by their association with the revolutionary socialist movement, which took as a truism Marx's dictum that 'Force is the midwife of all revolutions'. But, in part also, anarchist violence is related to the concept of natural society itself. When violence is directed towards the destruction of the state, or when, in a revolutionary situation where central government has broken down, it is used to prevent the establishment of a new government, it can be seen as fulfilling an essentially libertarian role. Natural society then is not being betrayed but, on the contrary, forcibly vindicated. (29)

The ambivalent attitude towards violence of mainstream anarchists was one reason why anarchism and pacifism developed as separate movements in the 19th century, despite their common opposition to war and militarism and their shared historical roots. (Kropotkin, not unfairly, claimed the Anabaptists among the precursors of modern anarchism.) But it was not the only reason. Most anarchists were militant atheists, even anti-theists: *'If God exists, it is necessary to abolish him!'*, declared Bakunin. Church was coupled with State, and religion was seen as part of the fraud which ruling classes used, along with force, to maintain their dominance. In addition, most anarchists perceived the peace movement as irredeemably bourgeois and liberal, weak in its analysis of the causes of war, and absurdly naive in seeking to establish international peace while wishing at the same time to retain the state. (30)

These are some of the reasons why, when Christian anarchism emerged, it was either not seen as anarchism or its adherents rejected the anarchist label. But what could be more anarchist than the *Declaration of Principle* of the New England Non-resistance Society, founded by William Lloyd Garrison and Adin Ballou in 1828: *'We cannot acknowledge allegiance to any human government; neither can we oppose any such government by a resort to physical force...Our country is the world, our countrymen are all mankind.'*? (31) This kind of anarchism started, not from any analysis of society and the state but from the doctrine of non-resistance in the Sermon on the Mount. The implications of the doctrine were spelled out with even greater clarity, vigour and effect by Leo Tolstoy (1828–1910) in *The Kingdom of God is Within You* (1893), (32) and other 'peace essays' that flowed from his prolific pen.

Convergence of Pacifism and Anarchism

The development of Christian Anarchism presaged the increasing convergence (but not complete merging) of pacifism and anarchism in the 20th century. The outcome is the school of thought and action (one of its tenets is developing thought through action) known as 'pacifist

anarchism', 'anarcho-pacifism' and 'nonviolent anarchism'. Experience of two world wars encouraged the convergence. But, undoubtedly, the most important single event to do so (although the response of both pacifists and anarchists to it was curiously delayed) was the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima on 6 August 1945. Ending as it did five years of 'total war', it symbolised dramatically the nature of the modern Moloch that man has erected in the shape of the state. In the campaign against nuclear weapons in the 1950s and early 1960s, more particularly in the radical wings of it, such as the Committee of 100 in Britain, pacifists and anarchists educated each other.

The single most important intellectual influence helping to shape anarcho-pacifism is that of M K Gandhi (1869–1948), who began his career as a disciple of Tolstoy. Tolstoy's great weapon for undermining (rather than overthrowing) the state was the refusal by individuals to cooperate with it and obey its immoral demands — the weapons defended by Henry David Thoreau in his classic essay on 'Civil Disobedience' (1849), (33) and the one used by pacifist COs. But Gandhi, in the course of the whole Indian movement for national liberation, showed that there is a whole range of weapons, collective as well as individual, in the armoury of those who are prepared to resist oppressive structures. In doing so he shifted the emphasis from passive non-resistance to active non-violent resistance. He also emphasised the theory of power underlying their use: the theory of 'voluntary servitude', originally outlined by Etienne de la Boetie in 1548, namely that structures of power, even when they seem to rely on physical force, depend in the last analysis on the co-operation, however reluctant, of those over whom power is exercised. Further, Gandhi clarified the relationship between means and ends, particularly with reference to the use of violence. Means, he insisted, must not merely be consistent with ends; this principle, though preferable to 'the end justifies the means', is based on a misleading dichotomy. Means are ends, never merely instrumental but also always expressive of values; means are end-creating or ends-in-the making. One implication of this view is that we can, in a sense, forget what are called 'ends' and focus on 'means', confident in the knowledge that if the 'means' are pure, then the desired 'ends' will follow. Another is that our conceptions of desirable futures, our 'utopias', are only mental constructs for guiding our actions here and now. We realise our 'utopias', insofar as they are realisable at all, by acting now as if 'utopia' had already arrived. Lastly, Gandhi developed the concept of nonviolent revolution, to be seen not as a programme for the seizure of power, but as a programme for transforming relationships. The concept sits neatly with the observation of the German anarchist, Gustav Landauer (1870–1919): *'The state is a condition, a certain relationship between beings, a mode of behaviour; we destroy it by contracting other relationships, by behaving differently.'*

Gandhi's ideas were popularised in the West in books such as Richard Gregg's *The Power of Nonviolence* (1935), (34) and Bart de Ligt's *The Conquest of Violence* (1937). (35) The latter is particularly important for anarchists since, as one himself, de Ligt specifically addressed those who lust for revolution. *'The more violence, the less revolution'*, he declared. He also linked Gandhian principled nonviolence with the pragmatic nonviolent direct action of the syndicalists. (The General Strike is an expression of total nonco-operation by workers, though it should be added that most syndicalists believed that the revolution should be defended by armed workers.)

In the 1950s and 1960s anarcho-pacifism began to gel, tough-minded anarchists adding to the mixture their critique of the state, and tender-minded pacifists their critique of violence. Its first practical manifestation was at the level of method: nonviolent direct action, principled and pragmatic, was used widely in both the Civil Rights movement in the USA and the campaign against

nuclear weapons in Britain and elsewhere. These two movements provided part of the matrix for the emerging New Left. It soon became clear that what was 'new' about the New Left — hardly surprising since it was triggered by disillusionment among socialists with both Marxian Communism (Stalinist variety) and Social Democracy — was in large part a rediscovery and reassertion of libertarian socialism that had been submerged for over a generation. In its first decade several themes, theories, actions, all distinctly libertarian, began to come to the fore and were given intellectual expression by the American anarcho-pacifist, Paul Goodman (1911–72) (36): anti-militarism, the rediscovery of community, community action, radical decentralism, participatory democracy, the organisation of the poor and oppressed inter-racially, and the building of counter-culture and counter-institutions (such as new co-ops, collectives and communes). For a brief period it looked, at least to anarcho-pacifists, as though these might be woven into a grand strategy for nonviolent revolution. Then, from 1967 , for reasons explored by Nigel Young (37) the movement (really 'a movement of movements') experienced a failure of nerve. The prospect (or dream) vanished, and by the early 1970s the New Left had disintegrated, the end being marked by, among other things, the bombings carried out by the New Left's 'dark angels', the Weathermen and the Angry Brigade.

The collapse of the New Left coincided with the exhaustion of the less well-publicised Sarvodaya (welfare of all) movement for nonviolent revolution in India, led by Vinoba Bhave and Jayaprakash Narayan (1902–1979), which had sought through voluntary villagisation of land to realise Gandhi's dream of an India of village republics. The implication of Sarvodaya for the subject of this book is brought out by the statement of Jayaprakash Narayan: *'In a Sarvodaya world society the present nation states have no place.'* (38) In the India case the disintegration was disguised by the movement's venture, sparked off by students in Bihar, into confrontation politics — a venture which led to the declaration of a state of emergency in 1975–77 and the period of unstable politics that has followed. (39)

It would be premature, however, to write off anarcho-pacifism. In India, Gandhi remains a potent symbol and source of inspiration. And in the West, since the demise of the New left, various groups, such as War Resisters' International, The Peace News constituency in Britain, and the Philadelphia Life Center in the USA, have sought to give clearer definition to the central concept of anarcho-pacifism: nonviolent revolution. (40) At the same time, the counter-cultural critique of modern industrial society has been extended, notably by Theodore Roszak, (41) and links established between anarcho-pacifism and the ecological and Women's Liberation movements. The production and use of nuclear energy, an issue being pressed by anarcho-pacifists, among others, may — just possibly — become in the 1980s the catalyst for a mass nonviolent movement, comparable to the movement against nuclear weapons twenty or so years ago.

Meanwhile, the nation state still stands as 'the norm of modern political organisation'. It is not likely to be abolished, in the way Bakunin envisaged. But it may be subverted or transcended. There are forces at work in the world — multi-nationals and 'sub-nationalisms', for example — which are finding it necessary to use both larger and smaller frames of reference than the nation state provides. Anarcho-pacifism is only one of these forces and not, some may think, the most important. But its continued opposition to war and preparations for war, its clear transnational orientation and appeal, and its insistence on the importance of rediscovering community at all levels from the local to the global — the latter encapsulated in the counter-culture's vision of humankind coming home to their 'global village' — make it a potentially significant source of both subversion and transcendence. These nonviolent revolutionaries do not think that the nation

state is 'the foundation of world order': they think it is the active promoter of disorder, and fear that its various rival agents will one day start throwing nuclear bombs at each other and destroy the only civilisation we have. The nation state is not 'the chief definer' of their 'identity' — it does not 'permeate' their 'outlook'; and even the atheists among them find it blasphemous to regard it as 'the main object of individual loyalties'. They may prattle on about love and peace, but they are modern Anabaptists and, like their heretical forebears, they can recognise an 'abomination' when they see it.

Geoffrey Ostergaard
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