> *of any of the natural influences that individuals or groups of individuals exert on them. What we want is the abolition of influences which are artificial, privileged, legal, official."* [quoted by Malatesta, **Anarchy**, p. 51]

In other words, those influences which stem from hierarchical authority.

This is because hierarchical systems like capitalism deny liberty and, as a result, people's *"mental, moral, intellectual and physical qualities are dwarfed, stunted and crushed"* (see section B.1 for more details). Thus one of *"the grand truths of Anarchism"* is that *"to be really free is to allow each one to live their lives in their own way as long as each allows all to do the same."* This is why anarchists fight for a better society, for a society which respects individuals and their freedom. Under capitalism, *"[e]verything is upon the market for sale: all is merchandise and commerce"* but there are *"certain things that are priceless. Among these are life, liberty and happiness, and these are things which the society of the future, the free society, will guarantee to all."* Anarchists, as a result, seek to make people aware of their dignity, individuality and liberty and to encourage the spirit of revolt, resistance and solidarity in those subject to authority. This gets us denounced by the powerful as being breakers of the peace, but anarchists consider the struggle for freedom as infinitely better than the peace of slavery. Anarchists, as a result of our ideals, *"believe in peace at any price – except at the price of liberty. But this precious gift the wealth-producers already seem to have lost. Life . . . they have; but what is life worth when it lacks those elements which make for enjoyment?"* [Lucy Parsons, **Liberty, Equality & Solidarity**, p. 103, p. 131, p. 103 and p. 134]

So, in a nutshell, Anarchists seek a society in which people interact in ways which enhance the liberty of all rather than crush the liberty (and so potential) of the many for the bene-

An Anarchist FAQ — Section A

mendations (see section B.1 for more on this distinction). In a nutshell, then, anarchism is anti-authoritarianism.

Anarchists are anti-authoritarians because they believe that no human being should dominate another. Anarchists, in L. Susan Brown's words, *"believe in the inherent dignity and worth of the human individual."* [**The Politics of Individualism**, p. 107] Domination is inherently degrading and demeaning, since it submerges the will and judgement of the dominated to the will and judgement of the dominators, thus destroying the dignity and self-respect that comes only from personal autonomy. Moreover, domination makes possible and generally leads to exploitation, which is the root of inequality, poverty, and social breakdown.

In other words, then, the essence of anarchism (to express it positively) is free co-operation between equals to maximise their liberty and individuality.

Co-operation between equals is the key to anti-authoritarianism. By co-operation we can develop and protect our own intrinsic value as unique individuals as well as enriching our lives and liberty for *"[n]o individual can recognise his own humanity, and consequently realise it in his lifetime, if not by recognising it in others and co-operating in its realisation for others . . . My freedom is the freedom of all since I am not truly free in thought and in fact, except when my freedom and my rights are confirmed and approved in the freedom and rights of all men [and women] who are my equals."* [Michael Bakunin, quoted by Errico Malatesta, **Anarchy**, p. 30]

While being anti-authoritarians, anarchists recognise that human beings have a social nature and that they mutually influence each other. We cannot escape the "authority" of this mutual influence, because, as Bakunin reminds us:

> *"The abolition of this mutual influence would be death. And when we advocate the freedom of the masses, we are by no means suggesting the abolition*

For anarchists, **real** wealth is other people and the planet on which we live. Or, in the words of Emma Goldman, it *"consists in things of utility and beauty, in things which help to create strong, beautiful bodies and surroundings inspiring to live in . . . [Our] goal is the freest possible expression of all the latent powers of the individual . . . Such free display of human energy being possible only under complete individual and social freedom,"* in other words *"social equality."* [**Red Emma Speaks**, pp. 67-8]

Also, honouring individuality does not mean that anarchists are idealists, thinking that people or ideas develop outside of society. Individuality and ideas grow and develop within society, in response to material and intellectual interactions and experiences, which people actively analyse and interpret. Anarchism, therefore, is a **materialist** theory, recognising that ideas develop and grow from social interaction and individuals' mental activity (see Michael Bakunin's **God and the State** for the classic discussion of materialism versus idealism).

This means that an anarchist society will be the creation of human beings, not some deity or other transcendental principle, since *"[n]othing ever arranges itself, least of all in human relations. It is men [sic] who do the arranging, and they do it according to their attitudes and understanding of things."* [Alexander Berkman, **What is Anarchism?**, p. 185]

Therefore, anarchism bases itself upon the power of ideas and the ability of people to act and transform their lives based on what they consider to be right. In other words, liberty.

A.2.1 What is the essence of anarchism?

As we have seen, *"an-archy"* implies *"without rulers"* or *"without (hierarchical) authority."* Anarchists are not against "authorities" in the sense of experts who are particularly knowledgeable, skilful, or wise, though they believe that such authorities should have no power to force others to follow their recom-

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italism. Moreover, even the elite under such conditions are not really free, because they must live in a stunted society made ugly and barren by the tyranny and alienation of the majority. And since individuality develops to the fullest only with the widest contact with other free individuals, members of the elite are restricted in the possibilities for their own development by the scarcity of free individuals with whom to interact. (See also section A.2.5 – Why are anarchists in favour of equality?)

Finally, solidarity means mutual aid: working voluntarily and co-operatively with others who share the same goals and interests. But without liberty and equality, society becomes a pyramid of competing classes based on the domination of the lower by the higher strata. In such a society, as we know from our own, it's "dominate or be dominated," "dog eat dog," and "everyone for themselves." Thus "rugged individualism" is promoted at the expense of community feeling, with those on the bottom resenting those above them and those on the top fearing those below them. Under such conditions, there can be no society-wide solidarity, but only a partial form of solidarity within classes whose interests are opposed, which weakens society as a whole. (See also section A.2.6 – Why is solidarity important to anarchists?)

It should be noted that solidarity does not imply self-sacrifice or self-negation. As Errico Malatesta makes clear:

> *"we are all egoists, we all seek our own satisfaction. But the anarchist finds his greatest satisfaction in struggling for the good of all, for the achievement of a society in which he [sic] can be a brother among brothers, and among healthy, intelligent, educated, and happy people. But he who is adaptable, who is satisfied to live among slaves and draw profit from the labour of slaves, is not, and cannot be, an anarchist."* [**Errico Malatesta: His Life and Ideas**, p. 23]

*the individual **participate**."* [Murray Bookchin, **The Modern Crisis**, p. 79] Consequently, any political theory which bases itself purely on the social or the individual is false.

In order for individuality to develop to the fullest possible extent, anarchists consider it essential to create a society based on three principles: **liberty**, **equality** and **solidarity**. These principles are shared by all anarchists. Thus we find, the communist-anarchist Peter Kropotkin talking about a revolution inspired by *"the beautiful words, Liberty, Equality and Solidarity."* [**The Conquest of Bread**, p. 128] Individualist-anarchist Benjamin Tucker wrote of a similar vision, arguing that anarchism *"insists on Socialism . . . on true Socialism, Anarchistic Socialism: the prevalance on earth of Liberty, Equality, and Solidarity."* [**Instead of a Book**, p. 363] All three principles are interdependent.

Liberty is essential for the full flowering of human intelligence, creativity, and dignity. To be dominated by another is to be denied the chance to think and act for oneself, which is the only way to grow and develop one's individuality. Domination also stifles innovation and personal responsibility, leading to conformity and mediocrity. Thus the society that maximises the growth of individuality will necessarily be based on voluntary association, not coercion and authority. To quote Proudhon, *"All associated and all free."* Or, as Luigi Galleani puts it, anarchism is *"the autonomy of the individual within the freedom of association"* [**The End of Anarchism?**, p. 35] (See further section A.2.2 – Why do anarchists emphasise liberty?).

If liberty is essential for the fullest development of individuality, then equality is essential for genuine liberty to exist. There can be no real freedom in a class-stratified, hierarchical society riddled with gross inequalities of power, wealth, and privilege. For in such a society only a few – those at the top of the hierarchy – are relatively free, while the rest are semi-slaves. Hence without equality, liberty becomes a mockery – at best the "freedom" to choose one's master (boss), as under cap-

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A.2 What does anarchism stand for?

These words by Percy Bysshe Shelley gives an idea of what anarchism stands for in practice and what ideals drive it:

The man
Of virtuous soul commands not, nor obeys:
Power, like a desolating pestilence,
Pollutes whate'er it touches, and obedience,
Bane of all genius, virtue, freedom, truth,
Makes slaves of men, and, of the human frame,
A mechanised automaton.

As Shelley's lines suggest, anarchists place a high priority on liberty, desiring it both for themselves and others. They also consider individuality – that which makes one a unique person – to be a most important aspect of humanity. They recognise, however, that individuality does not exist in a vacuum but is a **social** phenomenon. Outside of society, individuality is impossible, since one needs other people in order to develop, expand, and grow.

Moreover, between individual and social development there is a reciprocal effect: individuals grow within and are shaped by a particular society, while at the same time they help shape and change aspects of that society (as well as themselves and other individuals) by their actions and thoughts. A society not based on free individuals, their hopes, dreams and ideas would be hollow and dead. Thus, *"the making of a human being. . . is a collective process, a process in which both community and*

anarchism, but the historic anarchist movement (i.e. groups of people calling their ideas anarchism and aiming for an anarchist society) is essentially a product of working class struggle against capitalism and the state, against oppression and exploitation, and **for** a free society of free and equal individuals.

Section A: What is Anarchism?

Modern civilisation faces three potentially catastrophic crises: (1) social breakdown, a shorthand term for rising rates of poverty, homelessness, crime, violence, alienation, drug and alcohol abuse, social isolation, political apathy, dehumanisation, the deterioration of community structures of self-help and mutual aid, etc.; (2) destruction of the planet's delicate ecosystems on which all complex forms of life depend; and (3) the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons.

Orthodox opinion, including that of Establishment "experts," mainstream media, and politicians, generally regards these crises as separable, each having its own causes and therefore capable of being dealt with on a piecemeal basis, in isolation from the other two. Obviously, however, this "orthodox" approach isn't working, since the problems in question are getting worse. Unless some better approach is taken soon, we are clearly headed for disaster, either from catastrophic war, ecological Armageddon, or a descent into urban savagery – or all of the above.

Anarchism offers a unified and coherent way of making sense of these crises, by tracing them to a common source. This source is the principle of **hierarchical authority**, which underlies the major institutions of all "civilised" societies, whether capitalist or "communist." Anarchist analysis therefore starts from the fact that all of our major institutions are in the form of hierarchies, i.e. organisations that concentrate power at the top of a pyramidal structure, such as corporations, government bureaucracies, armies, political parties, religious organisations, universities, etc. It then goes on to show how the authoritarian relations inherent in such hierarchies negatively affect individuals, their society, and culture. In the first part of this FAQ (**sections A to E**) we will present the anarchist analysis of hierarchical authority and its negative effects in greater detail.

> *endeavoured to establish their personal authority."* [**Anarchism**, pp. 158-9]

Kropotkin placed the struggle of working class people (from which modern anarchism sprung) on par with these older forms of popular organisation. He argued that *"the labour combinations. . . were an outcome of the same popular resistance to the growing power of the few – the capitalists in this case"* as were the clan, the village community and so on, as were *"the strikingly independent, freely federated activity of the 'Sections' of Paris and all great cities and many small 'Communes' during the French Revolution"* in 1793. [**Op. Cit.**, p. 159]

Thus, while anarchism as a political theory is an expression of working class struggle and self-activity against capitalism and the modern state, the ideas of anarchism have continually expressed themselves in action throughout human existence. Many indigenous peoples in North America and elsewhere, for example, practised anarchism for thousands of years before anarchism as a specific political theory existed. Similarly, anarchistic tendencies and organisations have existed in every major revolution – the New England Town Meetings during the American Revolution, the Parisian 'Sections' during the French Revolution, the workers' councils and factory committees during the Russian Revolution to name just a few examples (see Murray Bookchin's **The Third Revolution** for details). This is to be expected if anarchism is, as we argue, a product of resistance to authority then any society with authorities will provoke resistance to them and generate anarchistic tendencies (and, of course, any societies without authorities cannot help but being anarchistic).

In other words, anarchism is an expression of the struggle against oppression and exploitation, a generalisation of working people's experiences and analyses of what is wrong with the current system and an expression of our hopes and dreams for a better future. This struggle existed before it was called

unlike other forms of socialism, *"lifted its sacrilegious arm, not only against Capitalism, but also against these pillars of Capitalism: Law, Authority, and the State."* All anarchist writers did was to *"work out a general expression of [anarchism's] principles, and the theoretical and scientific basis of its teachings"* derived from the experiences of working class people in struggle as well as analysing the evolutionary tendencies of society in general. [**Op. Cit.**, p. 19 and p. 57]

However, anarchistic tendencies and organisations in society have existed long before Proudhon put pen to paper in 1840 and declared himself an anarchist. While anarchism, as a specific political theory, was born with the rise of capitalism (Anarchism *"emerged at the end of the eighteenth century . . .[and] took up the dual challenge of overthrowing both Capital and the State."* [Peter Marshall, **Op. Cit.**, p. 4]) anarchist writers have analysed history for libertarian tendencies. Kropotkin argued, for example, that *"from all times there have been Anarchists and Statists."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 16] In **Mutual Aid** (and elsewhere) Kropotkin analysed the libertarian aspects of previous societies and noted those that successfully implemented (to some degree) anarchist organisation or aspects of anarchism. He recognised this tendency of actual examples of anarchistic ideas to predate the creation of the "official" anarchist movement and argued that:

> *"From the remotest, stone-age antiquity, men [and women] have realised the evils that resulted from letting some of them acquire personal authority. . . Consequently they developed in the primitive clan, the village community, the medieval guild . . . and finally in the free medieval city, such institutions as enabled them to resist the encroachments upon their life and fortunes both of those strangers who conquered them, and those clansmen of their own who*

It should not be thought, however, that anarchism is just a critique of modern civilisation, just "negative" or "destructive." Because it is much more than that. For one thing, it is also a proposal for a free society. Emma Goldman expressed what might be called the "anarchist question" as follows: *"The problem that confronts us today. . . is how to be one's self and yet in oneness with others, to feel deeply with all human beings and still retain one's own characteristic qualities."* [**Red Emma Speaks**, pp. 158-159] In other words, how can we create a society in which the potential for each individual is realised but not at the expense of others? In order to achieve this, anarchists envision a society in which, instead of being controlled ***"from the top down"*** through hierarchical structures of centralised power, the affairs of humanity will, to quote Benjamin Tucker, *"be managed by individuals or voluntary associations."* [**Anarchist Reader**, p. 149] While later sections of the FAQ (**sections I and J**) will describe anarchism's positive proposals for organising society in this way, "from the bottom up," some of the constructive core of anarchism will be seen even in the earlier sections. The positive core of anarchism can even be seen in the anarchist critique of such flawed solutions to the social question as Marxism and right-wing "libertarianism" (**sections F and H**, respectively).

As Clifford Harper elegantly puts it, *"[l]ike all great ideas, anarchism is pretty simple when you get down to it – human beings are at their best when they are living free of authority, deciding things among themselves rather than being ordered about."* [**Anarchy: A Graphic Guide**, p. vii] Due to their desire to maximise individual and therefore social freedom, anarchists wish to dismantle all institutions that repress people:

> *"Common to all Anarchists is the desire to free society of all political and social coercive institutions which stand in the way of the development*

of a free humanity." [Rudolf Rocker, **Anarcho-Syndicalism**, p. 9]

As we'll see, all such institutions are hierarchies, and their repressive nature stems directly from their hierarchical form.

Anarchism is a socio-economic and political theory, but not an ideology. The difference is **very** important. Basically, theory means you have ideas; an ideology means ideas have you. Anarchism is a body of ideas, but they are flexible, in a constant state of evolution and flux, and open to modification in light of new data. As society changes and develops, so does anarchism. An ideology, in contrast, is a set of "fixed" ideas which people believe dogmatically, usually ignoring reality or "changing" it so as to fit with the ideology, which is (by definition) correct. All such "fixed" ideas are the source of tyranny and contradiction, leading to attempts to make everyone fit onto a Procrustean Bed. This will be true regardless of the ideology in question – Leninism, Objectivism, "Libertarianism," or whatever – all will all have the same effect: the destruction of real individuals in the name of a doctrine, a doctrine that usually serves the interest of some ruling elite. Or, as Michael Bakunin puts it:

> *"Until now all human history has been only a perpetual and bloody immolation of millions of poor human beings in honour of some pitiless abstraction – God, country, power of state, national honour, historical rights, judicial rights, political liberty, public welfare."* [**God and the State**, p. 59]

Dogmas are static and deathlike in their rigidity, often the work of some dead "prophet," religious or secular, whose followers erect his or her ideas into an idol, immutable as stone. Anarchists want the living to bury the dead so that the living can get on with their lives. The living should rule the dead, not vice versa. Ideologies are the nemesis of critical thinking and

a certain extent, by such workers." [K. Steven Vincent, **Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and the Rise of French Republican Socialism**, p. 164]

Thus anarchism comes from the fight for liberty and our desires to lead a fully human life, one in which we have time to live, to love and to play. It was not created by a few people divorced from life, in ivory towers looking down upon society and making judgements upon it based on their notions of what is right and wrong. Rather, it was a product of working class struggle and resistance to authority, oppression and exploitation. As Albert Meltzer put it:

> *"There were never theoreticians of Anarchism as such, though it produced a number of theoreticians who discussed aspects of its philosophy. Anarchism has remained a creed that has been worked out in action rather than as the putting into practice of an intellectual idea. Very often, a bourgeois writer comes along and writes down what has already been worked out in practice by workers and peasants; he [or she] is attributed by bourgeois historians as being a leader, and by successive bourgeois writers (citing the bourgeois historians) as being one more case that proves the working class relies on bourgeois leadership."* [**Anarchism: Arguments for and against**, p. 18]

In Kropotkin's eyes, *"Anarchism had its origins in the same creative, constructive activity of the masses which has worked out in times past all the social institutions of mankind – and in the revolts . . . against the representatives of force, external to these social institutions, who had laid their hands on these institutions and used them for their own advantage."* More recently, *"Anarchy was brought forth by the same critical and revolutionary protest which gave birth to Socialism in general."* Anarchism,

> *from their aspirations to liberty and equality, aspirations which become particularly alive in the best heroic period of the life and struggle of the working masses.*
>
> *"The outstanding anarchist thinkers, Bakunin, Kropotkin and others, did not invent the idea of anarchism, but, having discovered it in the masses, simply helped by the strength of their thought and knowledge to specify and spread it."* [pp. 15-16]

Like the anarchist movement in general, the Makhnovists were a mass movement of working class people resisting the forces of authority, both Red (Communist) and White (Tsarist/Capitalist) in the Ukraine from 1917 to 1921. As Peter Marshall notes *"anarchism . . . has traditionally found its chief supporters amongst workers and peasants."* [**Demanding the Impossible**, p. 652]

Anarchism was created in, and by, the struggle of the oppressed for freedom. For Kropotkin, for example, *"Anarchism . . . originated in everyday struggles"* and *"the Anarchist movement was renewed each time it received an impression from some great practical lesson: it derived its origin from the teachings of life itself."* [**Evolution and Environment**, p. 58 and p. 57] For Proudhon, *"the proof"* of his mutualist ideas lay in the *"current practice, revolutionary practice"* of *"those labour associations . . . which have spontaneously . . . been formed in Paris and Lyon . . . [show that the] organisation of credit and organisation of labour amount to one and the same."* [**No Gods, No Masters**, vol. 1, pp. 59-60] Indeed, as one historian argues, there was *"close similarity between the associational ideal of Proudhon . . . and the program of the Lyon Mutualists"* and that there was *"a remarkable convergence [between the ideas], and it is likely that Proudhon was able to articulate his positive program more coherently because of the example of the silk workers of Lyon. The socialist ideal that he championed was already being realised, to*

consequently of freedom, providing a book of rules and "answers" which relieve us of the "burden" of thinking for ourselves.

In producing this FAQ on anarchism it is not our intention to give you the "correct" answers or a new rule book. We will explain a bit about what anarchism has been in the past, but we will focus more on its modern forms and why **we** are anarchists today. The FAQ is an attempt to provoke thought and analysis on your part. If you are looking for a new ideology, then sorry, anarchism is not for you.

While anarchists try to be realistic and practical, we are not "reasonable" people. "Reasonable" people uncritically accept what the "experts" and "authorities" tell them is true, and so they will always remain slaves! Anarchists know that, as Bakunin wrote:

> *"[a] person is strong only when he stands upon his own truth, when he speaks and acts from his deepest convictions. Then, whatever the situation he may be in, he always knows what he must say and do. He may fall, but he cannot bring shame upon himself or his causes."* [quoted in Albert Meltzer, **I couldn't Paint Golden Angels**, p. 2]

What Bakunin describes is the power of independent thought, which is the power of freedom. We encourage you not to be "reasonable," not to accept what others tell you, but to think and act for yourself!

One last point: to state the obvious, this is **not** the final word on anarchism. Many anarchists will disagree with much that is written here, but this is to be expected when people think for themselves. All we wish to do is indicate the **basic** ideas of anarchism and give our analysis of certain topics based on how we understand and apply these ideas. We are sure, however, that all anarchists will agree with the core ideas we present,

even if they may disagree with our application of them here and there.

French Revolution, vol. 1, p. 31] The anarchist objection to the identification of Marxism, "central planning" and State Socialism/Capitalism with socialism will be discussed in section H.

It is because of these differences with state socialists, and to reduce confusion, most anarchists just call themselves "anarchists," as it is taken for granted that anarchists are socialists. However, with the rise of the so-called "libertarian" right in the USA, some pro-capitalists have taken to calling themselves "anarchists" and that is why we have laboured the point somewhat here. Historically, and logically, anarchism implies anti-capitalism, i.e. socialism, which is something, we stress, that all anarchists have agreed upon (for a fuller discuss of why "anarcho"-capitalism is not anarchist see section F).

A.1.5 Where does anarchism come from?

Where does anarchism come from? We can do no better than quote **The Organisational Platform of the Libertarian Communists** produced by participants of the Makhnovist movement in the Russian Revolution (see Section A.5.4). They point out that:

> *"The class struggle created by the enslavement of workers and their aspirations to liberty gave birth, in the oppression, to the idea of anarchism: the idea of the total negation of a social system based on the principles of classes and the State, and its replacement by a free non-statist society of workers under self-management.*
>
> *"So anarchism does not derive from the abstract reflections of an intellectual or a philosopher, but from the direct struggle of workers against capitalism, from the needs and necessities of the workers,*

especially Bakunin all predict the horror of state Socialism with great accuracy. In addition, the anarchists were among the first and most vocal critics and opposition to the Bolshevik regime in Russia.

Nevertheless, being socialists, anarchists do share **some** ideas with **some** Marxists (though none with Leninists). Both Bakunin and Tucker accepted Marx's analysis and critique of capitalism as well as his labour theory of value (see section C). Marx himself was heavily influenced by Max Stirner's book **The Ego and Its Own**, which contains a brilliant critique of what Marx called "vulgar" communism as well as state socialism. There have also been elements of the Marxist movement holding views very similar to social anarchism (particularly the anarcho-syndicalist branch of social anarchism) – for example, Anton Pannekoek, Rosa Luxembourg, Paul Mattick and others, who are very far from Lenin. Karl Korsch and others wrote sympathetically of the anarchist revolution in Spain. There are many continuities from Marx to Lenin, but there are also continuities from Marx to more libertarian Marxists, who were harshly critical of Lenin and Bolshevism and whose ideas approximate anarchism's desire for the free association of equals.

Therefore anarchism is basically a form of socialism, one that stands in direct opposition to what is usually defined as "socialism" (i.e. state ownership and control). Instead of "central planning," which many people associate with the word "socialism," anarchists advocate free association and co-operation between individuals, workplaces and communities and so oppose "state" socialism as a form of state capitalism in which *"[e]very man [and woman] will be a wage-receiver, and the State the only wage payer."* [Benjamin Tucker, **The Individualist Anarchists**, p. 81] Thus anarchists reject Marxism (what most people think of as "socialism") as just *"[t]he idea of the State as Capitalist, to which the Social-Democratic fraction of the great Socialist Party is now trying to reduce Socialism."* [Peter Kropotkin, **The Great**

A.1 What is anarchism?

Anarchism is a political theory which aims to create anarchy, *"the absence of a master, of a sovereign."* [P-J Proudhon, **What is Property** , p. 264] In other words, anarchism is a political theory which aims to create a society within which individuals freely co-operate together as equals. As such anarchism opposes all forms of hierarchical control - be that control by the state or a capitalist - as harmful to the individual and their individuality as well as unnecessary.

In the words of anarchist L. Susan Brown:

> *"While the popular understanding of anarchism is of a violent, anti-State movement, anarchism is a much more subtle and nuanced tradition then a simple opposition to government power. Anarchists oppose the idea that power and domination are necessary for society, and instead advocate more co-operative, anti-hierarchical forms of social, political and economic organisation."* [**The Politics of Individualism**, p. 106]

However, "anarchism" and "anarchy" are undoubtedly the most misrepresented ideas in political theory. Generally, the words are used to mean "chaos" or "without order," and so, by implication, anarchists desire social chaos and a return to the "laws of the jungle."

This process of misrepresentation is not without historical parallel. For example, in countries which have considered government by one person (monarchy) necessary, the words "republic" or "democracy" have been used precisely like "anarchy,"

to imply disorder and confusion. Those with a vested interest in preserving the status quo will obviously wish to imply that opposition to the current system cannot work in practice, and that a new form of society will only lead to chaos. Or, as Errico Malatesta expresses it:

> *"since it was thought that government was necessary and that without government there could only be disorder and confusion, it was natural and logical that anarchy, which means absence of government, should sound like absence of order."* [**Anarchy**, p. 16]

Anarchists want to change this "common-sense" idea of "anarchy," so people will see that government and other hierarchical social relationships are both harmful **and** unnecessary:

> *"Change opinion, convince the public that government is not only unnecessary, but extremely harmful, and then the word anarchy, just because it means absence of government, will come to mean for everybody: natural order, unity of human needs and the interests of all, complete freedom within complete solidarity."* [**Op. Cit.**, pp. 16]

This FAQ is part of the process of changing the commonly-held ideas regarding anarchism and the meaning of anarchy. But that is not all. As well as combating the distortions produced by the "common-sense" idea of "anarchy", we also have to combat the distortions that anarchism and anarchists have been subjected to over the years by our political and social enemies. For, as Bartolomeo Vanzetti put it, anarchists are *"the radical of the radical – the black cats, the terrors of many, of all the bigots, exploiters, charlatans, fakers and oppressors. Consequently we are also the more slandered, misrepresented, misunderstood and persecuted of all."* [Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, **The Letters of Sacco and Vanzetti**, p. 274]

communistic anarchists and the Proudhon or middle-class anarchists." [**The Autobiographies of the Haymarket Martyrs**, p. 81]

So while social and individualist anarchists do disagree on many issues – for example, whether a true, that is non-capitalist, free market would be the best means of maximising liberty – they agree that capitalism is to be opposed as exploitative and oppressive and that an anarchist society must, by definition, be based on associated, not wage, labour. Only associated labour will *"decrease the powers of external wills and forces over the individual"* during working hours and such self-management of work by those who do it is the core ideal of real socialism. This perspective can be seen when Joseph Labadie argued that the trade union was *"the exemplification of gaining freedom by association"* and that *"[w]ithout his union, the workman is much more the slave of his employer than he is with it."* [**Different Phases of the Labour Question**]

However, the meanings of words change over time. Today "socialism" almost always refers to **state** socialism, a system that all anarchists have opposed as a denial of freedom and genuine socialist ideals. All anarchists would agree with Noam Chomsky's statement on this issue:

> *"If the left is understood to include 'Bolshevism,' then I would flatly dissociate myself from the left. Lenin was one of the greatest enemies of socialism."* [**Marxism, Anarchism, and Alternative Futures**, p. 779]

Anarchism developed in constant opposition to the ideas of Marxism, social democracy and Leninism. Long before Lenin rose to power, Mikhail Bakunin warned the followers of Marx against the *"Red bureaucracy"* that would institute *"the worst of all despotic governments"* if Marx's state-socialist ideas were ever implemented. Indeed, the works of Stirner, Proudhon and

ants. For Tucker, and other Individualist anarchists, capitalism is not a true free market, being marked by various laws and monopolies which ensure that capitalists have the advantage over working people, so ensuring the latter's exploitation via profit, interest and rent (see section G for a fuller discussion). Even Max Stirner, the arch-egoist, had nothing but scorn for capitalist society and its various "spooks," which for him meant ideas that are treated as sacred or religious, such as private property, competition, division of labour, and so forth.

So anarchists consider themselves as socialists, but socialists of a specific kind – ***libertarian socialists***. As the individualist anarchist Joseph A. Labadie puts it (echoing both Tucker and Bakunin):

> *"It is said that Anarchism is not socialism. This is a mistake. Anarchism is voluntary Socialism. There are two kinds of Socialism, archistic and anarchistic, authoritarian and libertarian, state and free. Indeed, every proposition for social betterment is either to increase or decrease the powers of external wills and forces over the individual. As they increase they are archistic; as they decrease they are anarchistic."* [**Anarchism: What It Is and What It Is Not**]

Labadie stated on many occasions that *"all anarchists are socialists, but not all socialists are anarchists."* Therefore, Daniel Guerin's comment that *"Anarchism is really a synonym for socialism. The anarchist is primarily a socialist whose aim is to abolish the exploitation of man by man"* is echoed throughout the history of the anarchist movement, be it the social or individualist wings. [**Anarchism**, p. 12] Indeed, the Haymarket Martyr Adolph Fischer used almost exactly the same words as Labadie to express the same fact – *"every anarchist is a socialist, but every socialist is not necessarily an anarchist"* – while acknowledging that the movement was *"divided into two factions; the*

Vanzetti knew what he was talking about. He and his comrade Nicola Sacco were framed by the US state for a crime they did not commit and were, effectively, electrocuted for being foreign anarchists in 1927. So this FAQ will have to spend some time correcting the slanders and distortions that anarchists have been subjected to by the capitalist media, politicians, ideologues and bosses (not to mention the distortions by our erstwhile fellow radicals like liberals and Marxists). Hopefully once we are finished you will understand why those in power have spent so much time attacking anarchism – it is the one idea which can effectively ensure liberty for all and end all systems based on a few having power over the many.

A.1.1 What does ”anarchy” mean?

The word ***"anarchy"*** is from the Greek, prefix **an** (or **a**), meaning *"not," "the want of," "the absence of,"* or *"the lack of"*, plus **archos**, meaning *"a ruler," "director", "chief," "person in charge,"* or *"authority."* Or, as Peter Kropotkin put it, Anarchy comes from the Greek words meaning *"contrary to authority."* [**Anarchism**, p. 284]

While the Greek words ***anarchos*** and ***anarchia*** are often taken to mean *"having no government"* or *"being without a government,"* as can be seen, the strict, original meaning of anarchism was not simply *"no government."* ***"An-archy"*** means *"without a ruler,"* or more generally, *"without authority,"* and it is in this sense that anarchists have continually used the word. For example, we find Kropotkin arguing that anarchism *"attacks not only capital, but also the main sources of the power of capitalism: law, authority, and the State."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 150] For anarchists, anarchy means *"not necessarily absence of order, as is generally supposed, but an absence of rule."* [Benjamin Tucker, **Instead of a Book**, p. 13] Hence David Weick's excellent summary:

> *"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. . . Anarchism is therefore more than anti-statism . . . [even if] government (the state) . . . is, appropriately, the central focus of anarchist critique."* [**Reinventing Anarchy**, p. 139]

For this reason, rather than being purely anti-government or anti-state, anarchism is primarily a movement against ***hierarchy.*** Why? Because hierarchy is the organisational structure that embodies authority. Since the state is the "highest" form of hierarchy, anarchists are, by definition, anti-state; but this is **not** a sufficient definition of anarchism. This means that real anarchists are opposed to all forms of hierarchical organisation, not only the state. In the words of Brian Morris:

> *"The term anarchy comes from the Greek, and essentially means 'no ruler.' Anarchists are people who reject all forms of government or coercive authority, all forms of hierarchy and domination. They are therefore opposed to what the Mexican anarchist Flores Magon called the 'sombre trinity' – state, capital and the church. Anarchists are thus opposed to both capitalism and to the state, as well as to all forms of religious authority. But anarchists also seek to establish or bring about by varying means, a condition of anarchy, that is, a decentralised society without coercive institutions, a society organised through a federation of voluntary associations."* [*"Anthropology and Anarchism,"* pp. 35-41, **Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed**, no. 45, p. 38]

Reference to "hierarchy" in this context is a fairly recent development – the "classical" anarchists such as Proudhon,

Moreover, anarchists also reject capitalism for being authoritarian **as well as** exploitative. Under capitalism, workers do not govern themselves during the production process nor have control over the product of their labour. Such a situation is hardly based on equal freedom for all, nor can it be non-exploitative, and is so opposed by anarchists. This perspective can best be found in the work of Proudhon's (who inspired both Tucker and Bakunin) where he argues that anarchism would see *"[c]apitalistic and proprietary exploitation stopped everywhere [and] the wage system abolished"* for *"either the workman. . . will be simply the employee of the proprietor-capitalist-promoter; or he will participate . . . In the first case the workman is subordinated, exploited: his permanent condition is one of obedience. . . In the second case he resumes his dignity as a man and citizen. . . he forms part of the producing organisation, of which he was before but the slave . . . we need not hesitate, for we have no choice. . . it is necessary to form an ASSOCIATION among workers . . . because without that, they would remain related as subordinates and superiors, and there would ensue two. . . castes of masters and wage-workers, which is repugnant to a free and democratic society."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 233 and pp. 215-216]

Therefore **all** anarchists are anti-capitalist (*"If labour owned the wealth it produced, there would be no capitalism"* [Alexander Berkman, **What is Anarchism?**, p. 44]). Benjamin Tucker, for example – the anarchist most influenced by liberalism (as we will discuss later) – called his ideas *"Anarchistic-Socialism"* and denounced capitalism as a system based upon *"the usurer, the receiver of interest, rent and profit."* Tucker held that in an anarchist, non-capitalist, free-market society, capitalists will become redundant and exploitation of labour by capital would cease, since *"labour. . . will. . . secure its natural wage, its entire product."* [**The Individualist Anarchists**, p. 82 and p. 85] Such an economy will be based on mutual banking and the free exchange of products between co-operatives, artisans and peas-

cialists." They did so because, as Kropotkin put it in his classic essay *"Modern Science and Anarchism," "[s]o long as Socialism was understood in its wide, generic, and true sense – as an effort to* ***abolish*** *the exploitation of Labour by Capital – the Anarchists were marching hand-in-hands with the Socialists of that time."* [**Evolution and Environment**, p. 81] Or, in Tucker's words, *"the bottom claim of Socialism [is] that labour should be put in possession of its own,"* a claim that both *"the two schools of Socialistic thought . . . State Socialism and Anarchism"* agreed upon. [**The Anarchist Reader**, p. 144] Hence the word *"socialist"* was originally defined to include *"all those who believed in the individual's right to possess what he or she produced."* [Lance Klafta, *"Ayn Rand and the Perversion of Libertarianism,"* in **Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed**, no. 34] This opposition to exploitation (or usury) is shared by all true anarchists and places them under the socialist banner.

For most socialists, *"the only guarantee not to be robbed of the fruits of your labour is to possess the instruments of labour."* [Peter Kropotkin, **The Conquest of Bread**, p. 145] For this reason Proudhon, for example, supported workers' co-operatives, where *"every individual employed in the association . . . has an undivided share in the property of the company"* because by *"participation in losses and gains . . . the collective force [i.e. surplus] ceases to be a source of profits for a small number of managers: it becomes the property of all workers."* [**General Idea of the Revolution**, p. 222 and p. 223] Thus, in addition to desiring the end of exploitation of labour by capital, true socialists also desire a society within which the producers own and control the means of production (including, it should be stressed, those workplaces which supply services). The means by which the producers will do this is a moot point in anarchist and other socialist circles, but the desire remains a common one. Anarchists favour direct workers' control and either ownership by workers' associations or by the commune (see section A.3 on the different types of anarchists).

Bakunin and Kropotkin did use the word, but rarely (they usually preferred "authority," which was used as short-hand for "authoritarian"). However, it's clear from their writings that theirs was a philosophy against hierarchy, against any inequality of power or privileges between individuals. Bakunin spoke of this when he attacked *"official"* authority but defended *"natural influence,"* and also when he said:

> *"Do you want to make it impossible for anyone to oppress his fellow-man? Then make sure that no one shall possess power."* [**The Political Philosophy of Bakunin**, p. 271]

As Jeff Draughn notes, *"while it has always been a latent part of the 'revolutionary project,' only recently has this broader concept of anti-hierarchy arisen for more specific scrutiny. Nonetheless, the root of this is plainly visible in the Greek roots of the word 'anarchy.'"* [**Between Anarchism and Libertarianism: Defining a New Movement**]

We stress that this opposition to hierarchy is, for anarchists, not limited to just the state or government. It includes all authoritarian economic and social relationships as well as political ones, particularly those associated with capitalist property and wage labour. This can be seen from Proudhon's argument that *"**Capital** . . . in the political field is analogous to **government** . . . The economic idea of capitalism, the politics of government or of authority, and the theological idea of the Church are three identical ideas, linked in various ways. To attack one of them is equivalent to attacking all of them . . . What capital does to labour, and the State to liberty, the Church does to the spirit. This trinity of absolutism is as baneful in practice as it is in philosophy. The most effective means for oppressing the people would be simultaneously to enslave its body, its will and its reason."* [quoted by Max Nettlau, **A Short History of Anarchism**, pp. 43-44] Thus we find Emma Goldman opposing capitalism

as it meant *"that man [or woman] must sell his [or her] labour"* and, therefore, *"that his [or her] inclination and judgement are subordinated to the will of a master."* [**Red Emma Speaks**, p. 50] Forty years earlier Bakunin made the same point when he argued that under the current system *"the worker sells his person and his liberty for a given time"* to the capitalist in exchange for a wage. [**Op. Cit.**, p. 187]

Thus "anarchy" means more than just "no government," it means opposition to all forms of authoritarian organisation and hierarchy. In Kropotkin's words, *"the origin of the anarchist inception of society . . . [lies in] the criticism . . . of the hierarchical organisations and the authoritarian conceptions of society; and . . . the analysis of the tendencies that are seen in the progressive movements of mankind."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 158] For Malatesta, anarchism *"was born in a moral revolt against social injustice"* and that the *"specific causes of social ills"* could be found in *"capitalistic property and the State."* When the oppressed *"sought to overthrow both State and property – then it was that anarchism was born."* [**Errico Malatesta: His Life and Ideas**, p. 19]

Thus any attempt to assert that anarchy is purely anti-state is a misrepresentation of the word and the way it has been used by the anarchist movement. As Brian Morris argues, *"when one examines the writings of classical anarchists. . . as well as the character of anarchist movements. . . it is clearly evident that it has never had this limited vision [of just being against the state]. It has always challenged all forms of authority and exploitation, and has been equally critical of capitalism and religion as it has been of the state."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 40]

And, just to state the obvious, anarchy does not mean chaos nor do anarchists seek to create chaos or disorder. Instead, we wish to create a society based upon individual freedom and voluntary co-operation. In other words, order from the bottom up, not disorder imposed from the top down by authorities. Such a society would be a true anarchy, a society without rulers.

which shares little with our ideas. In the United States, as Murray Bookchin noted, the *"term 'libertarian' itself, to be sure, raises a problem, notably, the specious identification of an anti-authoritarian ideology with a straggling movement for 'pure capitalism' and 'free trade.' This movement never created the word: it appropriated it from the anarchist movement of the [nineteenth] century. And it should be recovered by those anti-authoritarians . . . who try to speak for dominated people as a whole, not for personal egotists who identify freedom with entrepreneurship and profit."* Thus anarchists in America should *"restore in practice a tradition that has been denatured by"* the free-market right. [**The Modern Crisis**, pp. 154-5] And as we do that, we will continue to call our ideas libertarian socialism.

A.1.4 Are anarchists socialists?

Yes. All branches of anarchism are opposed to capitalism. This is because capitalism is based upon oppression and exploitation (see sections B and C). Anarchists reject the *"notion that men cannot work together unless they have a driving-master to take a percentage of their product"* and think that in an anarchist society *"the real workmen will make their own regulations, decide when and where and how things shall be done."* By so doing workers would free themselves *"from the terrible bondage of capitalism."* [Voltairine de Cleyre, *"Anarchism"*, **Exquisite Rebel**, p. 75 and p. 79]

(We must stress here that anarchists are opposed to **all** economic forms which are based on domination and exploitation, including feudalism, Soviet-style "socialism" – better called "state capitalism" –, slavery and so on. We concentrate on capitalism because that is what is dominating the world just now).

Individualists like Benjamin Tucker along with social anarchists like Proudhon and Bakunin proclaimed themselves ***"so-***

anarchist congress adopted it. [Max Nettlau, **A Short History of Anarchism**, p. 75 and p. 145] The use of the term "Libertarian" by anarchists became more popular from the 1890s onward after it was used in France in an attempt to get round anti-anarchist laws and to avoid the negative associations of the word "anarchy" in the popular mind (Sebastien Faure and Louise Michel published the paper **Le Libertaire – The Libertarian** – in France in 1895, for example). Since then, particularly outside America, it has **always** been associated with anarchist ideas and movements. Taking a more recent example, in the USA, anarchists organised ***"The Libertarian League"*** in July 1954, which had staunch anarcho-syndicalist principles and lasted until 1965. The US-based "Libertarian" Party, on the other hand has only existed since the early 1970's, well over 100 years after anarchists first used the term to describe their political ideas (and 90 years after the expression "libertarian communism" was first adopted). It is that party, not the anarchists, who have "stolen" the word. Later, in Section B, we will discuss why the idea of a "libertarian" capitalism (as desired by the Libertarian Party) is a contradiction in terms.

As we will also explain in Section I, only a libertarian-socialist system of ownership can maximise individual freedom. Needless to say, state ownership – what is commonly **called** "socialism" – is, for anarchists, not socialism at all. In fact, as we will elaborate in Section H, state "socialism" is just a form of capitalism, with no socialist content whatever. As Rudolf Rocker noted, for anarchists, socialism is *"not a simple question of a full belly, but a question of culture that would have to enlist the sense of personality and the free initiative of the individual; without freedom it would lead only to a dismal state capitalism which would sacrifice all individual thought and feeling to a fictitious collective interest."* [quoted by Colin Ward, *"Introduction"*, Rudolf Rocker, **The London Years**, p. 1]

Given the anarchist pedigree of the word "libertarian," few anarchists are happy to see it stolen by an ideology

While we discuss what an anarchy could look like in section I, Noam Chomsky sums up the key aspect when he stated that in a truly free society *"any interaction among human beings that is more than personal – meaning that takes institutional forms of one kind or another – in community, or workplace, family, larger society, whatever it may be, should be under direct control of its participants. So that would mean workers' councils in industry, popular democracy in communities, interaction between them, free associations in larger groups, up to organisation of international society."* [**Anarchism Interview**] Society would no longer be divided into a hierarchy of bosses and workers, governors and governed. Rather, an anarchist society would be based on free association in participatory organisations and run from the bottom up. Anarchists, it should be noted, try to create as much of this society today, in their organisations, struggles and activities, as they can.

A.1.2 What does ”anarchism” mean?

To quote Peter Kropotkin, Anarchism is *"the no-government system of socialism."* [**Anarchism**, p. 46] In other words, *"the abolition of exploitation and oppression of man by man, that is the abolition of private property [i.e. capitalism] and government."* [Errico Malatesta, **Towards Anarchism,"**, p. 75]

Anarchism, therefore, is a political theory that aims to create a society which is without political, economic or social hierarchies. Anarchists maintain that anarchy, the absence of rulers, is a viable form of social system and so work for the maximisation of individual liberty and social equality. They see the goals of liberty and equality as mutually self-supporting. Or, in Bakunin's famous dictum:

> "*We are convinced that freedom without Socialism is privilege and injustice, and that Socialism with-*

out freedom is slavery and brutality." [**The Political Philosophy of Bakunin**, p. 269]

The history of human society proves this point. Liberty without equality is only liberty for the powerful, and equality without liberty is impossible and a justification for slavery.

While there are many different types of anarchism (from individualist anarchism to communist-anarchism – see section A.3 for more details), there has always been two common positions at the core of all of them – opposition to government and opposition to capitalism. In the words of the individualist-anarchist Benjamin Tucker, anarchism insists *"on the abolition of the State and the abolition of usury; on no more government of man by man, and no more exploitation of man by man."* [cited by Eunice Schuster, **Native American Anarchism**, p. 140] All anarchists view profit, interest and rent as **usury** (i.e. as exploitation) and so oppose them and the conditions that create them just as much as they oppose government and the State.

More generally, in the words of L. Susan Brown, the *"unifying link"* within anarchism *"is a universal condemnation of hierarchy and domination and a willingness to fight for the freedom of the human individual."* [**The Politics of Individualism**, p. 108] For anarchists, a person cannot be free if they are subject to state or capitalist authority. As Voltairine de Cleyre summarised:

> *"Anarchism . . . teaches the possibility of a society in which the needs of life may be fully supplied for all, and in which the opportunities for complete development of mind and body shall be the heritage of all . . . [It] teaches that the present unjust organisation of the production and distribution of wealth must finally be completely destroyed, and replaced by a system which will insure to each the liberty to work, without first seeking a master to whom*

> **SOCIALISM:** *a social system in which the producers possess both political power and the means of producing and distributing goods.*

Just taking those two first definitions and fusing them yields:

> **LIBERTARIAN SOCIALISM:** *a social system which believes in freedom of action and thought and free will, in which the producers possess both political power and the means of producing and distributing goods.*

(Although we must add that our usual comments on the lack of political sophistication of dictionaries still holds. We only use these definitions to show that "libertarian" does not imply "free market" capitalism nor "socialism" state ownership. Other dictionaries, obviously, will have different definitions – particularly for socialism. Those wanting to debate dictionary definitions are free to pursue this unending and politically useless hobby but we will not).

However, due to the creation of the Libertarian Party in the USA, many people now consider the idea of *"libertarian socialism"* to be a contradiction in terms. Indeed, many "Libertarians" think anarchists are just attempting to associate the "anti-libertarian" ideas of "socialism" (as Libertarians conceive it) with Libertarian ideology in order to make those "socialist" ideas more "acceptable" – in other words, trying to steal the "libertarian" label from its rightful possessors.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Anarchists have been using the term "libertarian" to describe themselves and their ideas since the 1850's. According to anarchist historian Max Nettlau, the revolutionary anarchist Joseph Dejacque published **Le Libertaire, Journal du Mouvement Social** in New York between 1858 and 1861 while the use of the term *"libertarian communism"* dates from November, 1880 when a French

their rights, take action to defend their freedom, practice solidarity and co-operation, fight against oppression, organise themselves without leaders and bosses, the spirit of anarchism lives. Anarchists simply seek to strengthen these libertarian tendencies and bring them to their full fruition. As we discuss in section J, anarchists apply their ideas in many ways within capitalism in order to change it for the better until such time as we get rid of it completely. Section I discusses what we aim to replace it with, i.e. what anarchism aims for.

A.1.3 Why is anarchism also called libertarian socialism?

Many anarchists, seeing the negative nature of the definition of *"anarchism,"* have used other terms to emphasise the inherently positive and constructive aspect of their ideas. The most common terms used are *"free socialism," "free communism," "libertarian socialism,"* and *"libertarian communism."* For anarchists, libertarian socialism, libertarian communism, and anarchism are virtually interchangeable. As Vanzetti put it:

> *"After all we are socialists as the social-democrats, the socialists, the communists, and the I.W.W. are all Socialists. The difference – the fundamental one – between us and all the other is that they are authoritarian while we are libertarian; they believe in a State or Government of their own; we believe in no State or Government."* [Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, **The Letters of Sacco and Vanzetti**, p. 274]

But is this correct? Considering definitions from the **American Heritage Dictionary**, we find:

> **LIBERTARIAN:** *one who believes in freedom of action and thought; one who believes in free will.*

> *he [or she] must surrender a tithe of his [or her] product, which will guarantee his liberty of access to the sources and means of production. . . Out of the blindly submissive, it makes the discontented; out of the unconsciously dissatisfied, it makes the consciously dissatisfied . . . Anarchism seeks to arouse the consciousness of oppression, the desire for a better society, and a sense of the necessity for unceasing warfare against capitalism and the State."* [**Anarchy! An Anthology of Emma Goldman's Mother Earth**, pp. 23-4]

So Anarchism is a political theory which advocates the creation of anarchy, a society based on the maxim of *"no rulers."* To achieve this, *"[i]n common with all socialists, the anarchists hold that the private ownership of land, capital, and machinery has had its time; that it is condemned to disappear: and that all requisites for production must, and will, become the common property of society, and be managed in common by the producers of wealth. And. . . they maintain that the ideal of the political organisation of society is a condition of things where the functions of government are reduced to minimum. . . [and] that the ultimate aim of society is the reduction of the functions of government to nil – that is, to a society without government, to an-archy"* [Peter Kropotkin, **Op. Cit.**, p. 46]

Thus anarchism is both positive and negative. It analyses and critiques current society while at the same time offering a vision of a potential new society – a society that fulfils certain human needs which the current one denies. These needs, at their most basic, are liberty, equality and solidarity, which will be discussed in section A.2.

Anarchism unites critical analysis with hope, for, as Bakunin (in his pre-anarchist days) pointed out, *"the urge to destroy is a creative urge."* One cannot build a better society without understanding what is wrong with the present one.

However, it must be stressed that anarchism is more than just a means of analysis or a vision of a better society. It is also rooted in struggle, the struggle of the oppressed for their freedom. In other words, it provides a means of achieving a new system based on the needs of people, not power, and which places the planet before profit. To quote Scottish anarchist Stuart Christie:

> *"Anarchism is a movement for human freedom. It is concrete, democratic and egalitarian . . . Anarchism began – and remains – a direct challenge by the underprivileged to their oppression and exploitation. It opposes both the insidious growth of state power and the pernicious ethos of possessive individualism, which, together or separately, ultimately serve only the interests of the few at the expense of the rest.*
>
> *"Anarchism is both a theory and practice of life. Philosophically, it aims for the maximum accord between the individual, society and nature. Practically, it aims for us to organise and live our lives in such a way as to make politicians, governments, states and their officials superfluous. In an anarchist society, mutually respectful sovereign individuals would be organised in non-coercive relationships within naturally defined communities in which the means of production and distribution are held in common.*
>
> *"Anarchists are not dreamers obsessed with abstract principles and theoretical constructs . . . Anarchists are well aware that a perfect society cannot be won tomorrow. Indeed, the struggle lasts forever! However, it is the vision that provides the spur to struggle against things as they are, and for things that might be . . .*

> *"Ultimately, only struggle determines outcome, and progress towards a more meaningful community must begin with the will to resist every form of injustice. In general terms, this means challenging all exploitation and defying the legitimacy of all coercive authority. If anarchists have one article of unshakeable faith, it is that, once the habit of deferring to politicians or ideologues is lost, and that of resistance to domination and exploitation acquired, then ordinary people have a capacity to organise every aspect of their lives in their own interests, anywhere and at any time, both freely and fairly.*
>
> *"Anarchists do not stand aside from popular struggle, nor do they attempt to dominate it. They seek to contribute practically whatever they can, and also to assist within it the highest possible levels of both individual self-development and of group solidarity. It is possible to recognise anarchist ideas concerning voluntary relationships, egalitarian participation in decision-making processes, mutual aid and a related critique of all forms of domination in philosophical, social and revolutionary movements in all times and places."* [**My Granny made me an Anarchist**, pp. 162-3]

Anarchism, anarchists argue, is simply the theoretical expression of our capacity to organise ourselves and run society without bosses or politicians. It allows working class and other oppressed people to become conscious of our power as a class, defend our immediate interests, and fight to revolutionise society as a whole. Only by doing this can we create a society fit for human beings to live in.

It is no abstract philosophy. Anarchist ideas are put into practice everyday. Wherever oppressed people stand up for

dividuals, they are also superior to them in the sense that these rules can always be modified or repealed. Collectively, the associated "citizens" constitute a political "authority", but as this "authority" is based on horizontal relationships between themselves rather than vertical ones between themselves and an elite, the "authority" is non-hierarchical ("rational" or "natural," see section B.1 - "Why are anarchists against authority and hierarchy?" - for more on this). Thus Proudhon:

> *"In place of laws, we will put contracts [i.e. free agreement]. - No more laws voted by a majority, nor even unanimously; each citizen, each town, each industrial union, makes its own laws."* [**The General Idea of the Revolution**, pp. 245-6]

Such a system does not mean, of course, that everyone participates in every decision needed, no matter how trivial. While any decision can be put to the assembly (if the assembly so decides, perhaps prompted by some of its members), in practice certain activities (and so purely functional decisions) will be handled by the association's elected administration. This is because, to quote a Spanish anarchist activist, *"a collectivity as such cannot write a letter or add up a list of figures or do hundreds of chores which only an individual can perform."* Thus the need *"to **organise the administration.**"* Supposing an association is *"organised without any directive council or any hierarchical offices"* which *"meets in general assembly once a week or more often, when it settles all matters needful for its progress"* it still *"nominates a commission with **strictly administrative functions.**"* However, the assembly *"prescribes a definite line of conduct for this commission or gives it an **imperative mandate**"* and so *"would be **perfectly anarchist.**"* As it *"follows that **delegating** these tasks to qualified individuals, who are **instructed in advance how to proceed,** . . . does not mean an abdication of that collectivity's own liberty."* [Jose Llunas Pujols, quoted by

fit of a few. Anarchists do not want to give others power over themselves, the power to tell them what to do under the threat of punishment if they do not obey. Perhaps non-anarchists, rather than be puzzled why anarchists are anarchists, would be better off asking what it says about themselves that they feel this attitude needs any sort of explanation.

A.2.2 Why do anarchists emphasise liberty?

An anarchist can be regarded, in Bakunin's words, as a *"fanatic lover of freedom, considering it as the unique environment within which the intelligence, dignity and happiness of mankind can develop and increase."* [**Michael Bakunin: Selected Writings**, p. 196] Because human beings are thinking creatures, to deny them liberty is to deny them the opportunity to think for themselves, which is to deny their very existence as humans. For anarchists, freedom is a product of our humanity, because:

> *"The very fact. . . that a person has a consciousness of self, of being different from others, creates a desire to act freely. The craving for liberty and self-expression is a very fundamental and dominant trait."* [Emma Goldman, **Red Emma Speaks**, p. 439]

For this reason, anarchism *"proposes to rescue the self-respect and independence of the individual from all restraint and invasion by authority. Only in freedom can man [sic!] grow to his full stature. Only in freedom will he learn to think and move, and give the very best of himself. Only in freedom will he realise the true force of the social bonds which tie men together, and which are the true foundations of a normal social life."* [**Op. Cit.**, pp. 72-3]

Thus, for anarchists, freedom is basically individuals pursuing their own good in their own way. Doing so calls forth the

activity and power of individuals as they make decisions for and about themselves and their lives. Only liberty can ensure individual development and diversity. This is because when individuals govern themselves and make their own decisions they have to exercise their minds and this can have no other effect than expanding and stimulating the individuals involved. As Malatesta put it, *"[f]or people to become educated to freedom and the management of their own interests, they must be left to act for themselves, to feel responsibility for their own actions in the good or bad that comes from them. They'd make mistakes, but they'd understand from the consequences where they'd gone wrong and try out new ways."* [**Fra Contadini**, p. 26]

So, liberty is the precondition for the maximum development of one's individual potential, which is also a social product and can be achieved only in and through community. A healthy, free community will produce free individuals, who in turn will shape the community and enrich the social relationships between the people of whom it is composed. Liberties, being socially produced, *"do not exist because they have been legally set down on a piece of paper, but only when they have become the ingrown habit of a people, and when any attempt to impair them will meet with the violent resistance of the populace . . . One compels respect from others when one knows how to defend one's dignity as a human being. This is not only true in private life; it has always been the same in political life as well."* In fact, we *"owe all the political rights and privileges which we enjoy today in greater or lesser measures, not to the good will of their governments, but to their own strength."* [Rudolf Rocker, **Anarcho-syndicalism**, p. 75]

It is for this reason anarchists support the tactic of ***"Direct Action"*** (see section J.2) for, as Emma Goldman argued, we have *"as much liberty as [we are] willing to take. Anarchism therefore stands for direct action, the open defiance of, and resistance to, all laws and restrictions, economic, social, and moral."* It requires *"integrity, self-reliance, and courage. In short, it calls*

escape from this necessity." [Errico Malatesta, **Life and Ideas**, p. 85]

Anarchists obviously pick the last option, association, as the only means by which individuals can work together as free and equal human beings, respecting the uniqueness and liberty of one another. Only within direct democracy can individuals express themselves, practice critical thought and self-government, so developing their intellectual and ethical capacities to the full. In terms of increasing an individual's freedom and their intellectual, ethical and social faculties, it is far better to be sometimes in a minority than be subject to the will of a boss all the time. So what is the theory behind anarchist direct democracy?

As Bertrand Russell noted, the anarchist *"does not wish to abolish government in the sense of collective decisions: what he does wish to abolish is the system by which a decision is enforced upon those who oppose it."* [**Roads to Freedom**, p. 85] Anarchists see self-management as the means to achieve this. Once an individual joins a community or workplace, he or she becomes a "citizen" (for want of a better word) of that association. The association is organised around an assembly of all its members (in the case of large workplaces and towns, this may be a functional sub-group such as a specific office or neighbourhood). In this assembly, in concert with others, the contents of his or her political obligations are defined. In acting within the association, people must exercise critical judgement and choice, i.e. manage their own activity. Rather than promising to obey (as in hierarchical organisations like the state or capitalist firm), individuals participate in making their own collective decisions, their own commitments to their fellows. This means that political obligation is not owed to a separate entity above the group or society, such as the state or company, but to one's fellow "citizens."

Although the assembled people collectively legislate the rules governing their association, and are bound by them as in-

can freedom blossom and individuality be fully developed and protected. Anarchy will release the creativity and talent of the mass of people enslaved by hierarchy.

Anarchy will even be of benefit for those who are said to benefit from capitalism and its authority relations. Anarchists *"maintain that **both** rulers and ruled are spoiled by authority; **both** exploiters and exploited are spoiled by exploitation."* [Peter Kropotkin, **Act for Yourselves**, p. 83] This is because *"[i]n any hierarchical relationship the dominator as well as the submissive pays his dues. The price paid for the 'glory of command' is indeed heavy. Every tyrant resents his duties. He is relegated to drag the dead weight of the dormant creative potential of the submissive all along the road of his hierarchical excursion."* [For Ourselves, **The Right to Be Greedy**, Thesis 95]

A.2.11 Why are most anarchists in favour of direct democracy?

For most anarchists, direct democratic voting on policy decisions within free associations is the political counterpart of free agreement (this is also known as ***"self-management"***). The reason is that *"many forms of domination can be carried out in a 'free.' non-coercive, contractual manner. . . and it is naive. . . to think that mere opposition to political control will in itself lead to an end of oppression."* [John P. Clark, **Max Stirner's Egoism**, p. 93] Thus the relationships we create **within** an organisation is as important in determining its libertarian nature as its voluntary nature (see section A.2.14 for more discussion).

It is obvious that individuals must work together in order to lead a fully human life. And so, *"[h]aving to join with others humans"* the individual has three options: *"he [or she] must submit to the will of others (be enslaved) or subject others to his will (be in authority) or live with others in fraternal agreement in the interests of the greatest good of all (be an associate). Nobody can*

for free, independent spirits" and *"only persistent resistance"* can *"finally set [us] free. Direct action against the authority in the shop, direct action against the authority of the law, direct action against the invasive, meddlesome authority of our moral code, is the logical, consistent method of Anarchism."* [**Red Emma Speaks**, pp. 76-7]

Direct action is, in other words, the application of liberty, used to resist oppression in the here and now as well as the means of creating a free society. It creates the necessary individual mentality and social conditions in which liberty flourishes. Both are essential as liberty develops only within society, not in opposition to it. Thus Murray Bookchin writes:

> *"What freedom, independence, and autonomy people have in a given historical period is the product of long social traditions and . . . a **collective** development – which is not to deny that individuals play an important role in that development, indeed are ultimately obliged to do so if they wish to be free."* [**Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism**, p. 15]

But freedom requires the right **kind** of social environment in which to grow and develop. Such an environment **must** be decentralised and based on the direct management of work by those who do it. For centralisation means coercive authority (hierarchy), whereas self-management is the essence of freedom. Self-management ensures that the individuals involved use (and so develop) all their abilities – particularly their mental ones. Hierarchy, in contrast, substitutes the activities and thoughts of a few for the activities and thoughts of all the individuals involved. Thus, rather than developing their abilities to the full, hierarchy marginalises the many and ensures that their development is blunted (see also section B.1).

It is for this reason that anarchists oppose both capitalism and statism. As the French anarchist Sebastien Faure noted, au-

thority *"dresses itself in two principal forms: the political form, that is the State; and the economic form, that is private property."* [cited by Peter Marshall, **Demanding the Impossible**, p. 43] Capitalism, like the state, is based on centralised authority (i.e. of the boss over the worker), the very purpose of which is to keep the management of work out of the hands of those who do it. This means *"that the serious, final, complete liberation of the workers is possible only upon one condition: that of the appropriation of capital, that is, of raw material and all the tools of labour, including land, by the whole body of the workers."* [Michael Bakunin, quoted by Rudolf Rocker, **Op. Cit.**, p. 50]

Hence, as Noam Chomsky argues, a *"consistent anarchist must oppose private ownership of the means of production and the wage slavery which is a component of this system, as incompatible with the principle that labour must be freely undertaken and under the control of the producer."* [*"Notes on Anarchism"*, **For Reasons of State**, p. 158]

Thus, liberty for anarchists means a non-authoritarian society in which individuals and groups practice self-management, i.e. they govern themselves. The implications of this are important. First, it implies that an anarchist society will be non-coercive, that is, one in which violence or the threat of violence will not be used to "convince" individuals to do anything. Second, it implies that anarchists are firm supporters of individual sovereignty, and that, because of this support, they also oppose institutions based on coercive authority, i.e. hierarchy. And finally, it implies that anarchists' opposition to "government" means only that they oppose centralised, hierarchical, bureaucratic organisations or government. They do not oppose self-government through confederations of decentralised, grassroots organisations, so long as these are based on direct democracy rather than the delegation of power to "representatives" (see section A.2.9 for more on anarchist organisation). For authority is the opposite of liberty, and hence any form of

and so develop, their abilities to the fullest. By involving themselves and participating in the decisions that affect them, their workplace, their community and society, they can ensure the full development of their individual capacities.

With the free participation of all in social life, we would quickly see the end of inequality and injustice. Rather than people existing to make ends meet and being used to increase the wealth and power of the few as under capitalism, the end of hierarchy would see (to quote Kropotkin) *"the well-being of all"* and it is *"high time for the worker to assert his [or her] right to the common inheritance, and to enter into possession of it."* [**The Conquest of Bread**, p. 35 and p. 44] For only taking possession of the means of life (workplaces, housing, the land, etc.) can ensure *"liberty and justice, for liberty and justice are not decreed but are the result of economic independence. They spring from the fact that the individual is able to live without depending on a master, and to enjoy . . . the product of his [or her] toil."* [Ricardo Flores Magon, **Land and Liberty**, p. 62] Therefore liberty requires the abolition of capitalist private property rights in favour of ***"use rights."*** (see section B.3 for more details). Ironically, the *"abolition of property will free the people from homelessness and nonpossession."* [Max Baginski, *"Without Government,"* **Anarchy! An Anthology of Emma Goldman's Mother Earth**, p. 11] Thus anarchism promises *"both requisites of happiness – liberty and wealth."* In anarchy, *"mankind will live in freedom and in comfort."* [Benjamin Tucker, **Why I am an Anarchist**, p. 135 and p. 136]

Only self-determination and free agreement on every level of society can develop the responsibility, initiative, intellect and solidarity of individuals and society as a whole. Only anarchist organisation allows the vast talent which exists within humanity to be accessed and used, enriching society by the very process of enriching and developing the individual. Only by involving everyone in the process of thinking, planning, coordinating and implementing the decisions that affect them

indifference instead of involvement, heartlessness instead of solidarity, uniformity instead of unity, and privileged elites instead of equality. More importantly, such organisations destroy individual initiative and crush independent action and critical thinking. (For more on hierarchy, see section B.1 – "Why are anarchists against authority and hierarchy?").

That libertarian organisation can work and is based upon (and promotes) liberty was demonstrated in the Spanish Anarchist movement. Fenner Brockway, Secretary of the British Independent Labour Party, when visiting Barcelona during the 1936 revolution, noted that *"the great solidarity that existed among the Anarchists was due to each individual relying on his [sic] own strength and not depending upon leadership. . . . The organisations must, to be successful, be combined with free-thinking people; not a mass, but free individuals"* [quoted by Rudolf Rocker, **Anarcho-syndicalism**, p. 67f]

As sufficiently indicated already, hierarchical, centralised structures restrict freedom. As Proudhon noted: *"the centralist system is all very well as regards size, simplicity and construction: it lacks but one thing – the individual no longer belongs to himself in such a system, he cannot feel his worth, his life, and no account is taken of him at all."* [quoted by Martin Buber, **Paths in Utopia**, p. 33]

The effects of hierarchy can be seen all around us. It does not work. Hierarchy and authority exist everywhere, in the workplace, at home, in the street. As Bob Black puts it, *"[i]f you spend most of your waking life taking orders or kissing ass, if you get habituated to hierarchy, you will become passive-aggressive, sadomasochistic, servile and stupefied, and you will carry that load into every aspect of the balance of your life."* [*"The Libertarian as Conservative,"* **The Abolition of Work and other essays**, pp. 147-8]

This means that the end of hierarchy will mean a **massive** transformation in everyday life. It will involve the creation of individual-centred organisations within which all can exercise,

organisation based on the delegation of power is a threat to the liberty and dignity of the people subjected to that power.

Anarchists consider freedom to be the only social environment within which human dignity and diversity can flower. Under capitalism and statism, however, there is no freedom for the majority, as private property and hierarchy ensure that the inclination and judgement of most individuals will be subordinated to the will of a master, severely restricting their liberty and making impossible the *"full development of all the material, intellectual and moral capacities that are latent in every one of us."* [Michael Bakunin, **Bakunin on Anarchism**, p. 261] That is why anarchists seek to ensure *"that real justice and real liberty might come on earth"* for it is *"all false, all unnecessary, this wild waste of human life, of bone and sinew and brain and heart, this turning of people into human rags, ghosts, piteous caricatures of the creatures they had it in them to be, on the day they were born; that what is called 'economy', the massing up of things, is in reality the most frightful spending – the sacrifice of the maker to the made – the lose of all the finer and nobler instincts in the gain of one revolting attribute, the power to count and calculate."* [Voltairine de Cleyre, **The First Mayday: The Haymarket Speeches 1895-1910**, pp, 17-18]

(See section B for further discussion of the hierarchical and authoritarian nature of capitalism and statism).

A.2.3 Are anarchists in favour of organisation?

Yes. Without association, a truly human life is impossible. Liberty **cannot** exist without society and organisation. As George Barrett pointed out:

> *"To get the full meaning out of life we must co-operate, and to co-operate we must make agree-*

ments with our fellow-men. But to suppose that such agreements mean a limitation of freedom is surely an absurdity; on the contrary, they are the exercise of our freedom.

"If we are going to invent a dogma that to make agreements is to damage freedom, then at once freedom becomes tyrannical, for it forbids men to take the most ordinary everyday pleasures. For example, I cannot go for a walk with my friend because it is against the principle of Liberty that I should agree to be at a certain place at a certain time to meet him. I cannot in the least extend my own power beyond myself, because to do so I must co-operate with someone else, and co-operation implies an agreement, and that is against Liberty. It will be seen at once that this argument is absurd. I do not limit my liberty, but simply exercise it, when I agree with my friend to go for a walk.

"If, on the other hand, I decide from my superior knowledge that it is good for my friend to take exercise, and therefore I attempt to compel him to go for a walk, then I begin to limit freedom. This is the difference between free agreement and government." [**Objections to Anarchism**, pp. 348-9]

As far as organisation goes, anarchists think that *"far from creating authority, [it] is the only cure for it and the only means whereby each of us will get used to taking an active and conscious part in collective work, and cease being passive instruments in the hands of leaders."* [Errico Malatesta, **Errico Malatesta: His Life and Ideas**, p. 86] Thus anarchists are well aware of the need to organise in a structured and open manner. As Carole Ehrlich points out, while anarchists *"aren't opposed to structure"* and simply *"want to abolish **hierarchical** structure"* they are

For a fuller discussion on what an anarchist society would look like see section I. Anarchy, however, is not some distant goal but rather an aspect of current struggles against oppression and exploitation. Means and ends are linked, with direct action generating mass participatory organisations and preparing people to directly manage their own personal and collective interests. This is because anarchists, as we discuss in section I.2.3, see the framework of a free society being based on the organisations created by the oppressed in their struggle against capitalism in the here and now. In this sense, collective struggle creates the organisations as well as the individual attitudes anarchism needs to work. The struggle against oppression is the school of anarchy. It teaches us not only how to be anarchists but also gives us a glimpse of what an anarchist society would be like, what its initial organisational framework could be and the experience of managing our own activities which is required for such a society to work. As such, anarchists try to create the kind of world we want in our current struggles and do not think our ideas are only applicable "after the revolution." Indeed, by applying our principles today we bring anarchy that much nearer.

A.2.10 What will abolishing hierarchy mean and achieve?

The creation of a new society based upon libertarian organisations will have an incalculable effect on everyday life. The empowerment of millions of people will transform society in ways we can only guess at now.

However, many consider these forms of organisation as impractical and doomed to failure. To those who say that such confederal, non-authoritarian organisations would produce confusion and disunity, anarchists maintain that the statist, centralised and hierarchical form of organisation produces

tion from below upward" would start with the basic *"association"* and their federation *"first into a commune, then a federation of communes into regions, of regions into nations, and of nations into an international fraternal association."* [Michael Bakunin, **The Political Philosophy of Bakunin**, p. 298] This network of anarchist communities would work on three levels. There would be *"independent Communes for the territorial organisation, and of federations of Trade Unions [i.e. workplace associations] for the organisation of men [and women] in accordance with their different functions. . . [and] free combines and societies . . . for the satisfaction of all possible and imaginable needs, economic, sanitary, and educational; for mutual protection, for the propaganda of ideas, for arts, for amusement, and so on."* [Peter Kropotkin, **Evolution and Environment**, p. 79] All would be based on self-management, free association, free federation and self-organisation from the bottom up.

By organising in this manner, hierarchy is abolished in all aspects of life, because the people at the base of the organisation are in control, **not** their delegates. Only this form of organisation can replace government (the initiative and empowerment of the few) with anarchy (the initiative and empowerment of all). This form of organisation would exist in all activities which required group work and the co-ordination of many people. It would be, as Bakunin said, the means *"to integrate individuals into structures which they could understand and control."* [quoted by Cornelius Castoriadis, **Political and Social Writings**, vol. 2, p. 97] For individual initiatives, the individual involved would manage them.

As can be seen, anarchists wish to create a society based upon structures that ensure that no individual or group is able to wield power over others. Free agreement, confederation and the power of recall, fixed mandates and limited tenure are mechanisms by which power is removed from the hands of governments and placed in the hands of those directly affected by the decisions.

"almost always stereotyped as wanting no structure at all." This is not the case, for *"organisations that would build in accountability, diffusion of power among the maximum number of persons, task rotation, skill-sharing, and the spread of information and resources"* are based on *"good social anarchist principles of organisation!"* [*"Socialism, Anarchism and Feminism"*, **Quiet Rumours: An Anarcha-Feminist Reader**, p. 47 and p. 46]

The fact that anarchists are in favour of organisation may seem strange at first, but it is understandable. *"For those with experience only of authoritarian organisation,"* argue two British anarchists, *"it appears that organisation can only be totalitarian or democratic, and that those who disbelieve in government must by that token disbelieve in organisation at all. That is not so."* [Stuart Christie and Albert Meltzer, **The Floodgates of Anarchy**, p. 122] In other words, because we live in a society in which virtually all forms of organisation are authoritarian, this makes them appear to be the only kind possible. What is usually not recognised is that this mode of organisation is historically conditioned, arising within a specific kind of society – one whose motive principles are domination and exploitation. According to archaeologists and anthropologists, this kind of society has only existed for about 5,000 years, having appeared with the first primitive states based on conquest and slavery, in which the labour of slaves created a surplus which supported a ruling class.

Prior to that time, for hundreds of thousands of years, human and proto-human societies were what Murray Bookchin calls *"organic,"* that is, based on co-operative forms of economic activity involving mutual aid, free access to productive resources, and a sharing of the products of communal labour according to need. Although such societies probably had status rankings based on age, there were no hierarchies in the sense of institutionalised dominance-subordination relations enforced by coercive sanctions and resulting in class-stratification involving the economic exploitation of

one class by another (see Murray Bookchin, **The Ecology of Freedom**).

It must be emphasised, however, that anarchists do **not** advocate going "back to the Stone Age." We merely note that since the hierarchical-authoritarian mode of organisation is a relatively recent development in the course of human social evolution, there is no reason to suppose that it is somehow "fated" to be permanent. We do not think that human beings are genetically "programmed" for authoritarian, competitive, and aggressive behaviour, as there is no credible evidence to support this claim. On the contrary, such behaviour is socially conditioned, or **learned**, and as such, can be **unlearned** (see Ashley Montagu, **The Nature of Human Aggression**). We are not fatalists or genetic determinists, but believe in free will, which means that people can change the way they do things, including the way they organise society.

And there is no doubt that society needs to be better organised, because presently most of its wealth – which is produced by the majority – and power gets distributed to a small, elite minority at the top of the social pyramid, causing deprivation and suffering for the rest, particularly for those at the bottom. Yet because this elite controls the means of coercion through its control of the state (see section B.2.3), it is able to suppress the majority and ignore its suffering – a phenomenon that occurs on a smaller scale within all hierarchies. Little wonder, then, that people within authoritarian and centralised structures come to hate them as a denial of their freedom. As Alexander Berkman puts it:

> *"Any one who tells you that Anarchists don't believe in organisation is talking nonsense. Organisation is everything, and everything is organisation. The whole of life is organisation, conscious or unconscious . . . But there is organisation and organisation. Capitalist society is so badly organised that its var-*

In other words, any delegates required within an anarchist organisation or society are **not** representatives (as they are in a democratic government). Kropotkin makes the difference clear:

> *"The question of true delegation versus representation can be better understood if one imagines a hundred or two hundred men [and women], who meet each day in their work and share common concerns . . . who have discussed every aspect of the question that concerns them and have reached a decision. They then choose someone and send him [or her] to reach an agreement with other delegates of the same kind. . . The delegate is not authorised to do more than explain to other delegates the considerations that have led his [or her] colleagues to their conclusion. Not being able to impose anything, he [or she] will seek an understanding and will return with a simple proposition which his mandatories can accept or refuse. This is what happens when true delegation comes into being."* [**Words of a Rebel**, p. 132]

Unlike in a representative system, **power** is not delegated into the hands of the few. Rather, any delegate is simply a mouthpiece for the association that elected (or otherwise selected) them in the first place. All delegates and action committees would be mandated and subject to instant recall to ensure they express the wishes of the assemblies they came from rather than their own. In this way government is replaced by anarchy, a network of free associations and communities co-operating as equals based on a system of mandated delegates, instant recall, free agreement and free federation from the bottom up.

Only this system would ensure the *"free organisation of the people, an organisation from below upwards."* This *"free federa-*

affecting the collectives involved would be discussed. In addition, the fundamental, guiding principles and ideas of society would be debated and policy decisions made, put into practice, reviewed, and co-ordinated. The delegates would simply *"take their given mandates to the relative meetings and try to harmonise their various needs and desires. The deliberations would always be subject to the control and approval of those who delegated them"* and so *"there would be no danger than the interest of the people [would] be forgotten."* [Malatesta, **Op. Cit.**, p. 36]

Action committees would be formed, if required, to co-ordinate and administer the decisions of the assemblies and their congresses, under strict control from below as discussed above. Delegates to such bodies would have a limited tenure and, like the delegates to the congresses, have a fixed mandate – they are not able to make decisions on behalf of the people they are delegates for. In addition, like the delegates to conferences and congresses, they would be subject to instant recall by the assemblies and congresses from which they emerged in the first place. In this way any committees required to co-ordinate join activities would be, to quote Malatesta's words, *"always under the direct control of the population"* and so express the *"decisions taken at popular assemblies."* [**Errico Malatesta: His Life and Ideas**, p. 175 and p. 129]

Most importantly, the basic community assemblies can overturn any decisions reached by the conferences and withdraw from any confederation. Any compromises that are made by a delegate during negotiations have to go back to a general assembly for ratification. Without that ratification any compromises that are made by a delegate are not binding on the community that has delegated a particular task to a particular individual or committee. In addition, they can call confederal conferences to discuss new developments and to inform action committees about changing wishes and to instruct them on what to do about any developments and ideas.

> *ious members suffer: just as when you have a pain in some part of you, your whole body aches and you are ill. . . , not a single member of the organisation or union may with impunity be discriminated against, suppressed or ignored. To do so would be the same as to ignore an aching tooth: you would be sick all over."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 198]

Yet this is precisely what happens in capitalist society, with the result that it is, indeed, *"sick all over."*

For these reasons, anarchists reject authoritarian forms of organisation and instead support associations based on free agreement. Free agreement is important because, in Berkman's words, *"[o]nly when each is a free and independent unit, co-operating with others from his own choice because of mutual interests, can the world work successfully and become powerful."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 199] As we discuss in section A.2.14, anarchists stress that free agreement has to be complemented by direct democracy (or, as it is usually called by anarchists, self-management) within the association itself otherwise "freedom" become little more than picking masters.

Anarchist organisation is based on a massive decentralisation of power back into the hands of the people, i.e. those who are directly affected by the decisions being made. To quote Proudhon:

> *"Unless democracy is a fraud and the sovereignty of the People a joke, it must be admitted that each citizen in the sphere of his [or her] industry, each municipal, district or provincial council within its own territory . . . should act directly and by itself in administering the interests which it includes, and should exercise full sovereignty in relation to them."* [**General Idea of the Revolution**, p. 276]

It also implies a need for federalism to co-ordinate joint interests. For anarchism, federalism is the natural complement to self-management. With the abolition of the State, society *"can, and must, organise itself in a different fashion, but not from top to bottom . . . The future social organisation must be made solely from the bottom upwards, by the free association or federation of workers, firstly in their unions, then in the communes, regions, nations and finally in a great federation, international and universal. Then alone will be realised the true and life-giving order of freedom and the common good, that order which, far from denying, on the contrary affirms and brings into harmony the interests of individuals and of society."* [Bakunin, **Michael Bakunin: Selected Writings**, pp. 205-6] Because a *"truly popular organisation begins . . . from below"* and so *"federalism becomes a political institution of Socialism, the free and spontaneous organisation of popular life."* Thus libertarian socialism *"is federalistic in character."* [Bakunin, **The Political Philosophy of Bakunin**, pp. 273-4 and p. 272]

Therefore, anarchist organisation is based on direct democracy (or self-management) and federalism (or confederation). These are the expression and environment of liberty. Direct (or participatory) democracy is essential because liberty and equality imply the need for forums within which people can discuss and debate as equals and which allow for the free exercise of what Murray Bookchin calls *"the creative role of dissent."* Federalism is necessary to ensure that common interests are discussed and joint activity organised in a way which reflects the wishes of all those affected by them. To ensure that decisions flow from the bottom up rather than being imposed from the top down by a few rulers.

Anarchist ideas on libertarian organisation and the need for direct democracy and confederation will be discussed further in sections A.2.9 and A.2.11.

would be people . . . [with] no authority, only the duty to carry out what everyone involved wanted." [Errico Malatesta, **Fra Contadini**, p. 34] If the delegates act against their mandate or try to extend their influence or work beyond that already decided by the assembly (i.e. if they start to make policy decisions), they can be instantly recalled and their decisions abolished. In this way, the organisation remains in the hands of the union of individuals who created it.

This self-management by the members of a group at the base and the power of recall are essential tenets of any anarchist organisation. The **key** difference between a statist or hierarchical system and an anarchist community is who wields power. In a parliamentary system, for example, people give power to a group of representatives to make decisions for them for a fixed period of time. Whether they carry out their promises is irrelevant as people cannot recall them till the next election. Power lies at the top and those at the base are expected to obey. Similarly, in the capitalist workplace, power is held by an unelected minority of bosses and managers at the top and the workers are expected to obey.

In an anarchist society this relationship is reversed. No one individual or group (elected or unelected) holds power in an anarchist community. Instead decisions are made using direct democratic principles and, when required, the community can elect or appoint delegates to carry out these decisions. There is a clear distinction between policy making (which lies with everyone who is affected) and the co-ordination and administration of any adopted policy (which is the job for delegates).

These egalitarian communities, founded by free agreement, also freely associate together in confederations. Such a free confederation would be run from the bottom up, with decisions following from the elemental assemblies upwards. The confederations would be run in the same manner as the collectives. There would be regular local regional, "national" and international conferences in which all important issues and problems

everyone agrees. Far from it! As Luigi Galleani points out, *"[d]isagreements and friction will always exist. In fact they are an essential condition of unlimited progress. But once the bloody area of sheer animal competition - the struggle for food - has been eliminated, problems of disagreement could be solved without the slightest threat to the social order and individual liberty."* [**The End of Anarchism?**, p. 28] Anarchism aims to *"rouse the spirit of initiative in individuals and in groups."* These will *"create in their mutual relations a movement and a life based on the principles of free understanding"* and recognise that *"**variety, conflict even, is life and that uniformity is death.**"* [Peter Kropotkin, **Anarchism**, p. 143]

Therefore, an anarchist society will be based upon co-operative conflict as *"[c]onflict, per se, is not harmful. . . disagreements exist [and should not be hidden] . . . What makes disagreement destructive is not the fact of conflict itself but the addition of competition."* Indeed, *"a rigid demand for agreement means that people will effectively be prevented from contributing their wisdom to a group effort."* [Alfie Kohn, **No Contest: The Case Against Competition**, p. 156] It is for this reason that most anarchists reject consensus decision making in large groups (see section A.2.12).

So, in an anarchist society associations would be run by mass assemblies of all involved, based upon extensive discussion, debate and co-operative conflict between equals, with purely administrative tasks being handled by elected committees. These committees would be made up of mandated, recallable and temporary delegates who carry out their tasks under the watchful eyes of the assembly which elected them. Thus in an anarchist society, *"we'll look after our affairs ourselves and decide what to do about them. And when, to put our ideas into action, there is a need to put someone in charge of a project, we'll tell them to do [it] in such and such a way and no other . . . nothing would be done without our decision. So our delegates, instead of people being individuals whom we've given the right to order us about,*

A.2.4 Are anarchists in favour of ”absolute” liberty?

No. Anarchists do not believe that everyone should be able to *"do whatever they like,"* because some actions invariably involve the denial of the liberty of others.

For example, anarchists do not support the "freedom" to rape, to exploit, or to coerce others. Neither do we tolerate authority. On the contrary, since authority is a threat to liberty, equality, and solidarity (not to mention human dignity), anarchists recognise the need to resist and overthrow it.

The exercise of authority is not freedom. No one has a "right" to rule others. As Malatesta points out, anarchism supports *"freedom for everybody . . . with the only limit of the equal freedom for others; which does **not** mean . . . that we recognise, and wish to respect, the 'freedom' to exploit, to oppress, to command, which is oppression and certainly not freedom."* [**Errico Malatesta: His Life and Ideas**, p. 53]

In a capitalist society, resistance to all forms of hierarchical authority is the mark of a free person – be it private (the boss) or public (the state). As Henry David Thoreau pointed out in his essay on **"Civil Disobedience"** (1847)

> *"Disobedience is the true foundation of liberty. The obedient must be slaves."*

A.2.5 Why are anarchists in favour of equality?

As mentioned in above, anarchists are dedicated to social equality because it is the only context in which individual liberty can flourish. However, there has been much nonsense written about "equality," and much of what is commonly believed about it is very strange indeed. Before discussing

what anarchist **do** mean by equality, we have to indicate what we **do not** mean by it.

Anarchists do **not** believe in *"equality of endowment,"* which is not only non-existent but would be **very** undesirable if it could be brought about. Everyone is unique. Biologically determined human differences not only exist but are *"a cause for joy, not fear or regret."* Why? Because *"life among clones would not be worth living, and a sane person will only rejoice that others have abilities that they do not share."* [Noam Chomsky, **Marxism, Anarchism, and Alternative Futures**, p. 782]

That some people **seriously** suggest that anarchists means by "equality" that everyone should be **identical** is a sad reflection on the state of present-day intellectual culture and the corruption of words – a corruption used to divert attention from an unjust and authoritarian system and side-track people into discussions of biology. *"The uniqueness of the self in no way contradicts the principle of equality,"* noted Erich Fromm, *"The thesis that men are born equal implies that they all share the same fundamental human qualities, that they share the same basic fate of human beings, that they all have the same inalienable claim on freedom and happiness. It furthermore means that their relationship is one of solidarity, not one of domination-submission. What the concept of equality does not mean is that all men are alike."* [**The Fear of Freedom**, p. 228] Thus it would be fairer to say that anarchists seek equality **because** we recognise that everyone is different and, consequently, seek the full affirmation and development of that uniqueness.

Nor are anarchists in favour of so-called *"equality of outcome."* We have **no** desire to live in a society were everyone gets the same goods, lives in the same kind of house, wears the same uniform, etc. Part of the reason for the anarchist revolt against capitalism and statism is that they standardise so much of life (see George Reitzer's **The McDonaldisation of Society** on why capitalism is driven towards standardisation and conformity). In the words of Alexander Berkman:

that one can be both a capitalist and an anarchist at the same time (as in so-called "anarcho" capitalism). It should now be clear that since capitalism is based on hierarchy (not to mention statism and exploitation), "anarcho"-capitalism is a contradiction in terms. (For more on this, see Section F)

A.2.9 What sort of society do anarchists want?

Anarchists desire a decentralised society, based on free association. We consider this form of society the best one for maximising the values we have outlined above – liberty, equality and solidarity. Only by a rational decentralisation of power, both structurally and territorially, can individual liberty be fostered and encouraged. The delegation of power into the hands of a minority is an obvious denial of individual liberty and dignity. Rather than taking the management of their own affairs away from people and putting it in the hands of others, anarchists favour organisations which minimise authority, keeping power at the base, in the hands of those who are affected by any decisions reached.

Free association is the cornerstone of an anarchist society. Individuals must be free to join together as they see fit, for this is the basis of freedom and human dignity. However, any such free agreement must be based on decentralisation of power; otherwise it will be a sham (as in capitalism), as only equality provides the necessary social context for freedom to grow and development. Therefore anarchists support directly democratic collectives, based on "one person one vote" (for the rationale of direct democracy as the political counterpart of free agreement, see section A.2.11 – Why do most anarchists support direct democracy?).

We should point out here that an anarchist society does not imply some sort of idyllic state of harmony within which

individual liberty and social justice." [Robert Graham, **Op. Cit.**, p. 70]

It is for this reason that anarchists support collective action and organisation: it increases the bargaining power of working people and allows them to assert their autonomy (see section J).

Secondly, if we take the key element as being whether an association is voluntary or not we would have to argue that the current state system must be considered as "anarchy." In a modern democracy no one forces an individual to live in a specific state. We are free to leave and go somewhere else. By ignoring the hierarchical nature of an association, you can end up supporting organisations based upon the denial of freedom (including capitalist companies, the armed forces, states even) all because they are "voluntary." As Bob Black argues, *"[t]o demonise state authoritarianism while ignoring identical albeit contract-consecrated subservient arrangements in the large-scale corporations which control the world economy is fetishism at its worst."* [*The Libertarian as Conservative,* **The Abolition of Work and other essays**, p. 142] Anarchy is more than being free to pick a master.

Therefore opposition to hierarchy is a key anarchist position, otherwise you just become a "voluntary archist" - which is hardly anarchistic. For more on this see section A.2.14 (Why is voluntarism not enough?).

Anarchists argue that organisations do not need to be hierarchical, they can be based upon co-operation between equals who manage their own affairs directly. In this way we can do without hierarchical structures (i.e. the delegation of power in the hands of a few). Only when an association is self-managed by its members can it be considered truly anarchistic.

We are sorry to belabour this point, but some capitalist apologists, apparently wanting to appropriate the "anarchist" name because of its association with freedom, have recently claimed

"The spirit of authority, law, written and unwritten, tradition and custom force us into a common grove and make a man [or woman] a will-less automation without independence or individuality. . . All of us are its victims, and only the exceptionally strong succeed in breaking its chains, and that only partly." [**What is Anarchism?**, p. 165]

Anarchists, therefore, have little to desire to make this *"common grove"* even deeper. Rather, we desire to destroy it and every social relationship and institution that creates it in the first place.

"Equality of outcome" can only be introduced and maintained by force, which would **not** be equality anyway, as some would have more power than others! *"Equality of outcome"* is particularly hated by anarchists, as we recognise that every individual has different needs, abilities, desires and interests. To make all consume the same would be tyranny. Obviously, if one person needs medical treatment and another does not, they do not receive an "equal" amount of medical care. The same is true of other human needs. As Alexander Berkman put it:

"equality does not mean an equal amount but equal ***opportunity****. . . Do not make the mistake of identifying equality in liberty with the forced equality of the convict camp. True anarchist equality implies freedom, not quantity. It does not mean that every one must eat, drink, or wear the same things, do the same work, or live in the same manner. Far from it: the very reverse in fact."*

"Individual needs and tastes differ, as appetites differ. It is ***equal opportunity to satisfy*** *them that constitutes true equality.*

"Far from levelling, such equality opens the door for the greatest possible variety of activity and develop-

ment. For human character is diverse . . . Free opportunity of expressing and acting out your individuality means development of natural dissimilarities and variations." [**Op. Cit.**, pp. 164-5]

For anarchists, the "concepts" of "equality" as "equality of outcome" or "equality of endowment" are meaningless. However, in a hierarchical society, "equality of opportunity" and "equality of outcome" **are** related. Under capitalism, for example, the opportunities each generation face are dependent on the outcomes of the previous ones. This means that under capitalism "equality of opportunity" without a rough "equality of outcome" (in the sense of income and resources) becomes meaningless, as there is no real equality of opportunity for the off-spring of a millionaire and that of a road sweeper. Those who argue for "equality of opportunity" while ignoring the barriers created by previous outcomes indicate that they do not know what they are talking about – opportunity in a hierarchical society depends not only on an open road but also upon an equal start. From this obvious fact springs the misconception that anarchists desire "equality of outcome" – but this applies to a hierarchical system, in a free society this would not the case (as we will see).

Equality, in anarchist theory, does not mean denying individual diversity or uniqueness. As Bakunin observes:

"once equality has triumphed and is well established, will various individuals' abilities and their levels of energy cease to differ? Some will exist, perhaps not so many as now, but certainly some will always exist. It is proverbial that the same tree never bears two identical leaves, and this will probably be always be true. And it is even more truer with regard to human beings, who are much more complex than leaves. But this diversity is hardly an evil. On the contrary. . .

[*"For Democracy Where We Work: A rationale for social self-management"*, **Reinventing Anarchy, Again**, Howard J. Ehrlich (ed.), pp. 193-4]

Thus the consistent anarchist must oppose hierarchy in all its forms, including the capitalist firm. Not to do so is to support ***archy*** – which an anarchist, by definition, cannot do. In other words, for anarchists, *"[p]romises to obey, contracts of (wage) slavery, agreements requiring the acceptance of a subordinate status, are all illegitimate because they do restrict and restrain individual autonomy."* [Robert Graham, *"The Anarchist Contract*, **Reinventing Anarchy, Again**, Howard J. Ehrlich (ed.), p. 77] Hierarchy, therefore, is against the basic principles which drive anarchism. It denies what makes us human and *"divest[s] the personality of its most integral traits; it denies the very notion that the individual is **competent** to deal not only with the management of his or her personal life but with its most important context: the **social** context."* [Murray Bookchin, **Op. Cit.**, p. 202]

Some argue that as long as an association is voluntary, whether it has a hierarchical structure is irrelevant. Anarchists disagree. This is for two reasons. Firstly, under capitalism workers are driven by economic necessity to sell their labour (and so liberty) to those who own the means of life. This process re-enforces the economic conditions workers face by creating *"massive disparities in wealth . . . [as] workers. . . sell their labour to the capitalist at a price which does not reflect its real value."* Therefore:

"To portray the parties to an employment contract, for example, as free and equal to each other is to ignore the serious inequality of bargaining power which exists between the worker and the employer. To then go on to portray the relationship of subordination and exploitation which naturally results as the epitome of freedom is to make a mockery of both

"a fascist system. . . [is] absolutist - power goes from top down . . . the ideal state is top down control with the public essentially following orders.

"Let's take a look at a corporation. . . [I]f you look at what they are, power goes strictly top down, from the board of directors to managers to lower managers to ultimately the people on the shop floor, typing messages, and so on. There's no flow of power or planning from the bottom up. People can disrupt and make suggestions, but the same is true of a slave society. The structure of power is linear, from the top down." [**Keeping the Rabble in Line**, p. 237]

David Deleon indicates these similarities between the company and the state well when he writes:

"Most factories are like military dictatorships. Those at the bottom are privates, the supervisors are sergeants, and on up through the hierarchy. The organisation can dictate everything from our clothing and hair style to how we spend a large portion of our lives, during work. It can compel overtime; it can require us to see a company doctor if we have a medical complaint; it can forbid us free time to engage in political activity; it can suppress freedom of speech, press and assembly – it can use ID cards and armed security police, along with closed-circuit TVs to watch us; it can punish dissenters with 'disciplinary layoffs' (as GM calls them), or it can fire us. We are forced, by circumstances, to accept much of this, or join the millions of unemployed. . . In almost every job, we have only the 'right' to quit. Major decisions are made at the top and we are expected to obey, whether we work in an ivory tower or a mine shaft."

it is a resource of the human race. Thanks to this diversity, humanity is a collective whole in which the one individual complements all the others and needs them. As a result, this infinite diversity of human individuals is the fundamental cause and the very basis of their solidarity. It is all-powerful argument for equality." [*"All-Round Education"*, **The Basic Bakunin**, pp. 117-8]

Equality for anarchists means **social** equality, or, to use Murray Bookchin's term, the ***"equality of unequals"*** (some like Malatesta used the term ***"equality of conditions"*** to express the same idea). By this he means that an anarchist society recognises the differences in ability and need of individuals but does not allow these differences to be turned into power. Individual differences, in other words, *"would be of no consequence, because inequality in fact is lost in the collectivity when it cannot cling to some legal fiction or institution."* [Michael Bakunin, **God and the State**, p. 53]

If hierarchical social relationships, and the forces that create them, are abolished in favour of ones that encourage participation and are based on the principle of "one person, one vote" then natural differences would not be able to be turned into hierarchical power. For example, without capitalist property rights there would not be means by which a minority could monopolise the means of life (machinery and land) and enrich themselves by the work of others via the wages system and usury (profits, rent and interest). Similarly, if workers manage their own work, there is no class of capitalists to grow rich off their labour. Thus Proudhon:

"Now, what can be the origin of this inequality?

"As we see it, . . . that origin is the realisation within society of this triple abstraction: capital, labour and talent.

> *"It is because society has divided itself into three categories of citizen corresponding to the three terms of the formula. . . that caste distinctions have always been arrived at, and one half of the human race enslaved to the other. . . socialism thus consists of reducing the aristocratic formula of capital-labour-talent into the simpler formula of labour!. . . in order to make every citizen simultaneously, equally and to the same extent capitalist, labourer and expert or artist."* [**No Gods, No Masters**, vol. 1, pp. 57-8]

Like all anarchists, Proudhon saw this integration of functions as the key to equality and freedom and proposed self-management as the means to achieve it. Thus self-management is the key to social equality. Social equality in the workplace, for example, means that everyone has an equal say in the policy decisions on how the workplace develops and changes. Anarchists are strong believers in the maxim "that which touches all, is decided by all."

This does not mean, of course, that expertise will be ignored or that everyone will decide everything. As far as expertise goes, different people have different interests, talents, and abilities, so obviously they will want to study different things and do different kinds of work. It is also obvious that when people are ill they consult a doctor – an expert – who manages his or her own work rather than being directed by a committee. We are sorry to have to bring these points up, but once the topics of social equality and workers' self-management come up, some people start to talk nonsense. It is common sense that a hospital managed in a socially equal way will **not** involve non-medical staff voting on how doctors should perform an operation!

In fact, social equality and individual liberty are inseparable. Without the collective self-management of decisions that affect a group (equality) to complement the individual self-management of decisions that affect the individual (liberty), a

inate hierarchy per se, not simply replace one form of hierarchy with another." [Bookchin, **The Ecology of Freedom**, p. 27] A hierarchy is a pyramidally-structured organisation composed of a series of grades, ranks, or offices of increasing power, prestige, and (usually) remuneration. Scholars who have investigated the hierarchical form have found that the two primary principles it embodies are domination and exploitation. For example, in his classic article *"What Do Bosses Do?"* (**Review of Radical Political Economy**, Vol. 6, No. 2), a study of the modern factory, Steven Marglin found that the main function of the corporate hierarchy is not greater productive efficiency (as capitalists claim), but greater control over workers, the purpose of such control being more effective exploitation.

Control in a hierarchy is maintained by coercion, that is, by the threat of negative sanctions of one kind or another: physical, economic, psychological, social, etc. Such control, including the repression of dissent and rebellion, therefore necessitates centralisation: a set of power relations in which the greatest control is exercised by the few at the top (particularly the head of the organisation), while those in the middle ranks have much less control and the many at the bottom have virtually none.

Since domination, coercion, and centralisation are essential features of authoritarianism, and as those features are embodied in hierarchies, all hierarchical institutions are authoritarian. Moreover, for anarchists, any organisation marked by hierarchy, centralism and authoritarianism is state-like, or "statist." And as anarchists oppose both the state and authoritarian relations, anyone who does not seek to dismantle **all** forms of hierarchy cannot be called an anarchist. This applies to capitalist firms. As Noam Chomsky points out, the structure of the capitalist firm is extremely hierarchical, indeed fascist, in nature:

A.2.8 Is it possible to be an anarchist without opposing hierarchy?

No. We have seen that anarchists abhor authoritarianism. But if one is an anti-authoritarian, one must oppose all hierarchical institutions, since they embody the principle of authority. For, as Emma Goldman argued, *"it is not only government in the sense of the state which is destructive of every individual value and quality. It is the whole complex authority and institutional domination which strangles life. It is the superstition, myth, pretence, evasions, and subservience which support authority and institutional domination."* [**Red Emma Speaks**, p. 435] This means that *"there is and will always be a need to discover and overcome structures of hierarchy, authority and domination and constraints on freedom: slavery, wage-slavery [i.e. capitalism], racism, sexism, authoritarian schools, etc."* [Noam Chomsky, **Language and Politics**, p. 364]

Thus the consistent anarchist must oppose hierarchical relationships as well as the state. Whether economic, social or political, to be an anarchist means to oppose hierarchy. The argument for this (if anybody needs one) is as follows:

> *"All authoritarian institutions are organised as pyramids: the state, the private or public corporation, the army, the police, the church, the university, the hospital: they are all pyramidal structures with a small group of decision-makers at the top and a broad base of people whose decisions are **made for them** at the bottom. Anarchism does not demand the changing of labels on the layers, it doesn't want different people on top, it wants **us** to clamber out from underneath."* [Colin Ward, **Anarchy in Action**, p. 22]

Hierarchies *"share a common feature: they are organised systems of command and obedience"* and so anarchists seek *"to eliminate the hierarchical institutions which make a free society impossible."* [Malatesta and Hamon, **No Gods, No Masters**, vol. 2, p. 20] Without hierarchy, no one can be free from the authority of others. Without equality, some will have power over others, making decisions **for** them (i.e. governing them), and thus some will be more free than others. Which implies, just to state the obvious, anarchists seek equality in **all** aspects of life, not just in terms of wealth. Anarchists *"demand for every person not just his [or her] entire measure of the wealth of society but also his [or her] portion of social power."* [Malatesta and Hamon, **No Gods, No Masters**, vol. 2, p. 20] Thus self-management is needed to ensure both liberty **and** equality.

Social equality is required for individuals to both govern and express themselves, for the self-management it implies means *"people working in face-to-face relations with their fellows in order to bring the uniqueness of their own perspective to the business of solving common problems and achieving common goals."* [George Benello, **From the Ground Up**, p. 160] Thus equality allows the expression of individuality and so is a necessary base for individual liberty.

Section F.3 ("Why do 'anarcho'-capitalists place little or no value on equality?") discusses anarchist ideas on equality further. Noam Chomsky's essay *"Equality"* (contained in **The Chomsky Reader**) is a good summary of libertarian ideas on the subject.

A.2.6 Why is solidarity important to anarchists?

Solidarity, or mutual aid, is a key idea of anarchism. It is the link between the individual and society, the means by which individuals can work together to meet their common interests in an environment that supports and nurtures both liberty and equality. For anarchists, mutual aid is a fundamental feature of human life, a source of both strength and happiness and a fundamental requirement for a fully human existence.

Erich Fromm, noted psychologist and socialist humanist, points out that the *"human desire to experience union with others is rooted in the specific conditions of existence that characterise the human species and is one of the strongest motivations of human behaviour."* [**To Be or To Have**, p.107]

Therefore anarchists consider the desire to form "unions" (to use Max Stirner's term) with other people to be a natural need. These unions, or associations, must be based on equality and individuality in order to be fully satisfying to those who join them – i.e. they must be organised in an anarchist manner, i.e. voluntary, decentralised, and non-hierarchical.

Solidarity – co-operation between individuals – is necessary for life and is far from a denial of liberty. Solidarity, observed Errico Malatesta, *"is the only environment in which Man can express his personality and achieve his optimum development and enjoy the greatest possible wellbeing."* This *"coming together of individuals for the wellbeing of all, and of all for the wellbeing of each,"* results in *"the freedom of each not being limited by, but complemented – indeed finding the necessary* ***raison d'etre*** *in – the freedom of others."* [**Anarchy**, p. 29] In other words, solidarity and co-operation means treating each other as equals, refusing to treat others as means to an end and creating relationships which support freedom for all rather than a few dominating the many. Emma Goldman reiterated this theme, noting *"what wonderful results this unique force of man's individuality has achieved when strengthened by co-operation with other individualities . . . co-operation – as opposed to internecine strife and struggle – has worked for the survival and evolution of the species. . . . only mutual aid and voluntary co-operation . . . can create the basis for a free individual and associational life."* [**Red Emma Speaks**, p. 118]

Solidarity means associating together as equals in order to satisfy our common interests and needs. Forms of association not based on solidarity (i.e. those based on inequality) will crush the individuality of those subjected to them. As Ret

work, while it opens his [or her] eyes to the evil that is done by Capitalism and the State that supports it, and wakes up his [or her] thoughts concerning the possibility of organising consumption, production and exchange without the intervention of the capitalist and the state," that is, see the possibility of a free society. Kropotkin, like many anarchists, pointed to the Syndicalist and Trade Union movements as a means of developing libertarian ideas within existing society (although he, like most anarchists, did not limit anarchist activity exclusively to them). Indeed, any movement which *"permit[s] the working men [and women] to realise their solidarity and to feel the community of their interests . . . prepare[s] the way for these conceptions"* of communist-anarchism, i.e. the overcoming the spiritual domination of existing society within the minds of the oppressed. [**Evolution and Environment**, p. 83 and p. 85]

For anarchists, in the words of a Scottish Anarchist militant, the *"history of human progress [is] seen as the history of rebellion and disobedience, with the individual debased by subservience to authority in its many forms and able to retain his/her dignity only through rebellion and disobedience."* [Robert Lynn, **Not a Life Story, Just a Leaf from It**, p. 77] This is why anarchists stress self-liberation (and self-organisation, self-management and self-activity). Little wonder Bakunin considered *"rebellion"* as one of the *"three fundamental principles [which] constitute the essential conditions of all human development, collective or individual, in history."* [**God and the State**, p. 12] This is simply because individuals and groups cannot be freed by others, only by themselves. Such rebellion (self-liberation) is the **only** means by which existing society becomes more libertarian and an anarchist society a possibility.

emerge from the body of the people and correspond to the state of their development and advance as they advance." [**Op. Cit.**, p. 90]

Unless a process of self-emancipation occurs, a free society is impossible. Only when individuals free themselves, both materially (by abolishing the state and capitalism) and intellectually (by freeing themselves of submissive attitudes towards authority), can a free society be possible. We should not forget that capitalist and state power, to a great extent, is power over the minds of those subject to them (backed up, of course, with sizeable force if the mental domination fails and people start rebelling and resisting). In effect, a spiritual power as the ideas of the ruling class dominate society and permeate the minds of the oppressed. As long as this holds, the working class will acquiesce to authority, oppression and exploitation as the normal condition of life. Minds submissive to the doctrines and positions of their masters cannot hope to win freedom, to revolt and fight. Thus the oppressed must overcome the mental domination of the existing system before they can throw off its yoke (and, anarchists argue, direct action is the means of doing both – see sections J.2 and J.4). Capitalism and statism must be beaten spiritually and theoretically before it is beaten materially (many anarchists call this mental liberation ***"class consciousness"*** – see section B.7.4). And self-liberation through struggle against oppression is the only way this can be done. Thus anarchists encourage (to use Kropotkin's term) ***"the spirit of revolt."***

Self-liberation is a product of struggle, of self-organisation, solidarity and direct action. Direct action is the means of creating anarchists, free people, and so *"Anarchists have always advised taking an active part in those workers' organisations which carry on the **direct** struggle of Labour against Capital and its protector, – the State."* This is because *"[s]uch a struggle . . . better than any indirect means, permits the worker to obtain some temporary improvements in the present conditions of*

Marut points out, liberty needs solidarity, the recognition of common interests:

> *"The most noble, pure and true love of mankind is the love of oneself. **I** want to be free! **I** hope to be happy! **I** want to appreciate all the beauties of the world. But my freedom is secured **only** when all other people around me are free. I can only be happy when all other people around me are happy. I can only be joyful when all the people I see and meet look at the world with joy-filled eyes. And **only** then can I eat my fill with pure enjoyment when I have the secure knowledge that other people, too, can eat their fill as I do. And for that reason it is a question of **my own contentment**, only of **my own self**, when I rebel against every danger which threatens my freedom and my happiness. . ."* [Ret Marut (a.k.a. B. Traven), **The BrickBurner** magazine quoted by Karl S. Guthke, **B. Traven: The life behind the legends**, pp. 133-4]

To practice solidarity means that we recognise, as in the slogan of **Industrial Workers of the World**, that *"an injury to one is an injury to all."* Solidarity, therefore, is the means to protect individuality and liberty and so is an expression of self-interest. As Alfie Kohn points out:

> *"when we think about co-operation. . . we tend to associate the concept with fuzzy-minded idealism. . . This may result from confusing co-operation with altruism. . . Structural co-operation defies the usual egoism/altruism dichotomy. It sets things up so that by helping you I am helping myself at the same time. Even if my motive initially may have been selfish, our fates now are linked. We sink or swim together.*

> *Co-operation is a shrewd and highly successful strategy - a pragmatic choice that gets things done at work and at school even more effectively than competition does. . . There is also good evidence that co-operation is more conductive to psychological health and to liking one another."* [**No Contest: The Case Against Competition**, p. 7]

And, within a hierarchical society, solidarity is important not only because of the satisfaction it gives us, but also because it is necessary to resist those in power. Malatesta's words are relevant here:

> *"the oppressed masses who have never completely resigned themselves to oppress and poverty, and who . . . show themselves thirsting for justice, freedom and wellbeing, are beginning to understand that they will not be able to achieve their emancipation except by union and solidarity with all the oppressed, with the exploited everywhere in the world."* [**Anarchy**, p. 33]

By standing together, we can increase our strength and get what we want. Eventually, by organising into groups, we can start to manage our own collective affairs together and so replace the boss once and for all. *"**Unions** will. . . multiply the individual's means and secure his assailed property."* [Max Stirner, **The Ego and Its Own**, p. 258] By acting in solidarity, we can also replace the current system with one more to our liking: *"in union there is strength."* [Alexander Berkman, **What is Anarchism?**, p. 74]

Solidarity is thus the means by which we can obtain and ensure our own freedom. We agree to work together so that we will not have to work for **another**. By agreeing to share with each other we increase our options so that we may enjoy **more**,

> *amount of critical reflection will end their subjection and bring them freedom."* [Carole Pateman, **The Sexual Contract**, p. 205]

Anarchists aim to encourage these tendencies in everyday life to reject, resist and thwart authority and bring them to their logical conclusion – a society of free individuals, co-operating as equals in free, self-managed associations. Without this process of critical self-reflection, resistance and self-liberation a free society is impossible. Thus, for anarchists, anarchism comes from the natural resistance of subordinated people striving to act as free individuals within a hierarchical world. This process of resistance is called by many anarchists the ***"class struggle"*** (as it is working class people who are generally the most subordinated group within society) or, more generally, ***"social struggle."*** It is this everyday resistance to authority (in all its forms) and the desire for freedom which is the key to the anarchist revolution. It is for this reason that *"anarchists emphasise over and over that the class struggle provides the only means for the workers [and other oppressed groups] to achieve control over their destiny."* [Marie-Louise Berneri, **Neither East Nor West**, p. 32]

Revolution is a process, not an event, and every *"spontaneous revolutionary action"* usually results from and is based upon the patient work of many years of organisation and education by people with "utopian" ideas. The process of "creating the new world in the shell of the old" (to use another **I.W.W.** expression), by building alternative institutions and relationships, is but one component of what must be a long tradition of revolutionary commitment and militancy.

As Malatesta made clear, *"to encourage popular organisations of all kinds is the logical consequence of our basic ideas, and should therefore be an integral part of our programme. . . anarchists do not want to emancipate the people; we want the people to emancipate themselves. . . , we want the new way of life to*

institutions that limit one's freedom is mentally liberating, as it sets in motion the process of questioning authoritarian relationships in general. This process gives us insight into how society works, changing our ideas and creating new ideals. To quote Emma Goldman again: *"True emancipation begins. . . in woman's soul."* And in a man's too, we might add. It is only here that we can *"begin [our] inner regeneration, [cutting] loose from the weight of prejudices, traditions and customs."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 167] But this process must be self-directed, for as Max Stirner notes, *"the man who is set free is nothing but a freed man. . . a dog dragging a piece of chain with him."* [**The Ego and Its Own**, p. 168] By changing the world, even in a small way, we change ourselves.

In an interview during the Spanish Revolution, the Spanish anarchist militant Durutti said, *"we have a new world in our hearts."* Only self-activity and self-liberation allows us to create such a vision and gives us the confidence to try to actualise it in the real world.

Anarchists, however, do not think that self-liberation must wait for the future, after the "glorious revolution." The personal is political, and given the nature of society, how we act in the here and now will influence the future of our society and our lives. Therefore, even in pre-anarchist society anarchists try to create, as Bakunin puts it, *"not only the ideas but also the facts of the future itself."* We can do so by creating alternative social relationships and organisations, acting as free people in a non-free society. Only by our actions in the here and now can we lay the foundation for a free society. Moreover, this process of self-liberation goes on all the time:

> *"Subordinates of all kinds exercise their capacity for critical self-reflection every day – that is why masters are thwarted, frustrated and, sometimes, overthrown. But unless masters are overthrown, unless subordinates engage in political activity, no*

not less. Mutual aid is in my self-interest – that is, I see that it is to my advantage to reach agreements with others based on mutual respect and social equality; for if I dominate someone, this means that the conditions exist which allow domination, and so in all probability I too will be dominated in turn.

As Max Stirner saw, solidarity is the means by which we ensure that our liberty is strengthened and defended from those in power who want to rule us: *"Do you yourself count for nothing then?"*, he asks. *"Are you bound to let anyone do anything he wants to you? Defend yourself and no one will touch you. If millions of people are behind you, supporting you, then you are a formidable force and you will win without difficulty."* [quoted in Luigi Galleani's **The End of Anarchism?**, p. 79 - different translation in **The Ego and Its Own**, p. 197]

Solidarity, therefore, is important to anarchists because it is the means by which liberty can be created and defended against power. Solidarity is strength and a product of our nature as social beings. However, solidarity should not be confused with "herdism," which implies passively following a leader. In order to be effective, solidarity must be created by free people, co-operating together as **equals**. The "big WE" is **not** solidarity, although the desire for "herdism" is a product of our need for solidarity and union. It is a "solidarity" corrupted by hierarchical society, in which people are conditioned to blindly obey leaders.

A.2.7 Why do anarchists argue for self-liberation?

Liberty, by its very nature, cannot be given. An individual cannot be freed by another, but must break his or her own chains through their own effort. Of course, self-effort can also be part of collective action, and in many cases it has to be in order to attain its ends. As Emma Goldman points out:

> *"History tells us that every oppressed class [or group or individual] gained true liberation from its masters by its own efforts."* [**Red Emma Speaks**, p. 167]

This is because anarchists recognise that hierarchical systems, like any social relationship, shapes those subject to them. As Bookchin argued, "*class societies organise our psychic structures for command or obedience.*" This means that people ***internalise*** the values of hierarchical and class society and, as such, *"the State is not merely a constellation of bureaucratic and coercive instituions. It is also a state of mind, an instilled mentality for ordering reality . . . Its capacity to rule by brute force has always been limited . . . Without a high degree of co-operation from even the most victimised classes of society such as chattel slaves and serfs, its authority would eventually dissipate. Awe and apathy in the face of State power are products of social conditioning that renders this very power possible."* [**The Ecology of Freedom**, p. 159 and pp. 164-5] Self-liberation is the means by which we break down both internal ***and*** external chains, freeing ourselves mentally as well as physically.

Anarchists have long argued that people can only free themselves by their own actions. The various methods anarchists suggest to aid this process will be discussed in section J ("What Do Anarchists Do?") and will not be discussed here. However, these methods all involve people organising themselves, setting their own agendas, and acting in ways that empower them and eliminate their dependence on leaders to do things for them. Anarchism is based on people *"acting for themselves"* (performing what anarchists call ***"direct action"*** – see section J.2 for details).

Direct action has an empowering and liberating effect on those involved in it. Self-activity is the means by which the creativity, initiative, imagination and critical thought of those subjected to authority can be developed. It is the means by which society can be changed. As Errico Malatesta pointed out:

> *"Between man and his social environment there is a reciprocal action. Men make society what it is and society makes men what they are, and the result is therefore a kind of vicious circle. To transform society men [and women] must be changed, and to transform men, society must be changed . . . Fortunately existing society has not been created by the inspired will of a dominating class, which has succeeded in reducing all its subjects to passive and unconscious instruments of its interests. It is the result of a thousand internecine struggles, of a thousand human and natural factors . . .*
>
> *"From this the possibility of progress . . . We must take advantage of all the means, all the possibilities and the opportunities that the present environment allows us to act on our fellow men [and women] and to develop their consciences and their demands . . . to claim and to impose those major social transformations which are possible and which effectively serve to open the way to further advances later . . . We must seek to get all the people . . . to make demands, and impose itself and take for itself all the improvements and freedoms it desires as and when it reaches the state of wanting them, and the power to demand them . . . we must push the people to want always more and to increase its pressures [on the ruling elite], until it has achieved complete emancipation."* [**Errico Malatesta: His Life and Ideas**, pp. 188-9]

Society, while shaping all individuals, is also created by them, through their actions, thoughts, and ideals. Challenging

cause we do not believe in the possibility of imposing good by force and we do not want to be commanded . . . Today, that which . . . was the logical outcome of our ideas, the condition which our conception of the revolution and reorganisation of society imposes on us . . . [is] to live among the people and to win them over to our ideas by actively taking part in their struggles and sufferings." [Errico Malatesta, *"The Duties of the Present Hour"*, pp. 181-3, **Anarchism**, Robert Graham (ed.), pp. 180-1]

Despite most anarchists' tactical disagreement with propaganda by deed, few would consider it to be terrorism or rule out assassination under all circumstances. Bombing a village during a war because there **might** be an enemy in it is terrorism, whereas assassinating a murdering dictator or head of a repressive state is defence at best and revenge at worst. As anarchists have long pointed out, if by terrorism it is meant "killing innocent people" then the state is the greatest terrorist of them all (as well as having the biggest bombs and other weapons of destruction available on the planet). If the people committing "acts of terror" are really anarchists, they would do everything possible to avoid harming innocent people and never use the statist line that "collateral damage" is regrettable but inevitable. This is why the vast majority of "propaganda by the deed" acts were directed towards individuals of the ruling class, such as Presidents and Royalty, and were the result of previous acts of state and capitalist violence.

So "terrorist" acts have been committed by anarchists. This is a fact. However, it has nothing to do with anarchism as a socio-political theory. As Emma Goldman argued, it was *"not Anarchism, as such, but the brutal slaughter of the eleven steel workers [that] was the urge for Alexander Berkman's act."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 268] Equally, members of **other** political and religious

Max Nettlau, **A Short History of Anarchism**, p. 187] This, it should be noted, follows Proudhon's ideas that within the workers' associations *"all positions are elective, and the by-laws subject to the approval of the members."* [Proudhon, **Op. Cit.**, p. 222]

Instead of capitalist or statist hierarchy, self-management (i.e. direct democracy) would be the guiding principle of the freely joined associations that make up a free society. This would apply to the federations of associations an anarchist society would need to function. *"All the commissions or delegations nominated in an anarchist society,"* correctly argued Jose Llunas Pujols, *"must be subject to replacement and recall at any time by the permanent suffrage of the section or sections that elected them."* Combined with the *"imperative mandate"* and *"purely administrative functions,"* this *"make[s] it thereby impossible for anyone to arrogate to himself [or herself] a scintilla of authority."* [quoted by Max Nettlau, **Op. Cit.**, pp. 188-9] Again, Pujols follows Proudhon who demanded twenty years previously the *"implementation of the binding mandate"* to ensure the people do not *"adjure their sovereignty."* [**No Gods, No Masters**, vol. 1, p. 63]

By means of a federalism based on mandates and elections, anarchists ensure that decisions flow from the bottom-up. By making our own decisions, by looking after our joint interests ourselves, we exclude others ruling over us. Self-management, for anarchists, is essential to ensure freedom within the organisations so needed for any decent human existence.

Of course it could be argued that if you are in a minority, you are governed by others (*"Democratic rule is still rule"* [L. Susan Brown, **The Politics of Individualism**, p. 53]). Now, the concept of direct democracy as we have described it is not necessarily tied to the concept of majority rule. If someone finds themselves in a minority on a particular vote, he or she is confronted with the choice of either consenting or refusing to recognise it as binding. To deny the minority the opportunity to exercise

its judgement and choice is to infringe its autonomy and to impose obligation upon it which it has not freely accepted. The coercive imposition of the majority will is contrary to the ideal of self-assumed obligation, and so is contrary to direct democracy and free association. Therefore, far from being a denial of freedom, direct democracy within the context of free association and self-assumed obligation is the only means by which liberty can be nurtured (*"Individual autonomy limited by the obligation to hold given promises."* [Malatesta, quoted by quoted by Max Nettlau, **Errico Malatesta: The Biography of an Anarchist**]). Needless to say, a minority, if it remains in the association, can argue its case and try to convince the majority of the error of its ways.

And we must point out here that anarchist support for direct democracy does not suggest we think that the majority is always right. Far from it! The case for democratic participation is not that the majority is always right, but that no minority can be trusted not to prefer its own advantage to the good of the whole. History proves what common-sense predicts, namely that anyone with dictatorial powers (by they a head of state, a boss, a husband, whatever) will use their power to enrich and empower themselves at the expense of those subject to their decisions.

Anarchists recognise that majorities can and do make mistakes and that is why our theories on association place great importance on minority rights. This can be seen from our theory of self-assumed obligation, which bases itself on the right of minorities to protest against majority decisions and makes dissent a key factor in decision making. Thus Carole Pateman:

> *"If the majority have acted in bad faith. . . [then the] minority will have to take political action, including politically disobedient action if appropriate, to defend their citizenship and independence, and the political association itself. . . Political disobedience is*

chance to associate anarchism with mindless violence, thus alienating much of the population from the movement. This false association is renewed at every opportunity, regardless of the facts (for example, even though Individualist Anarchists rejected "propaganda by the deed" totally, they were also smeared by the press as "violent" and "terrorists").

In addition, as Kropotkin pointed out, the assumption behind propaganda by the deed, i.e. that everyone was waiting for a chance to rebel, was false. In fact, people are products of the system in which they live; hence they accepted most of the myths used to keep that system going. With the failure of propaganda by deed, anarchists turned back to what most of the movement had been doing anyway: encouraging the class struggle and the process of self-liberation. This turn back to the roots of anarchism can be seen from the rise in anarcho-syndicalist unions after 1890 (see section A.5.3). This position flows naturally from anarchist theory, unlike the idea of individual acts of violence:

> *"to bring about a revolution, and specially the Anarchist revolution[, it] is necessary that the people be conscious of their rights and their strength; it is necessary that they be ready to fight and ready to take the conduct of their affairs into their own hands. It must be the constant preoccupation of the revolutionists, the point towards which all their activity must aim, to bring about this state of mind among the masses . . . Who expects the emancipation of mankind to come, not from the persistent and harmonious co-operation of all men [and women] of progress, but from the accidental or providential happening of some acts of heroism, is not better advised that one who expected it from the intervention of an ingenious legislator or of a victorious general . . . our ideas oblige us to put all our hopes in the masses, be-*

collective action and this enthusiasm for acts of revolt by individuals and small groups increased." This did not last and Kropotkin soon attached *"progressively less importance to isolated acts of revolt"* particularly once *"he saw greater opportunities for developing collective action in the new militant trade unionism."* [Caroline Cahm, **Kropotkin and the Rise of Revolutionary Anarchism**, p. 92, p. 115, p. 129, pp. 129-30, p. 205] By the late 1880s and early 1890s he came to disapprove of such acts of violence. This was partly due to simple revulsion at the worse of the acts (such as the Barcelona Theatre bombing in response to the state murder of anarchists involved in the Jerez uprising of 1892 and Emile Henry's bombing of a cafe in response to state repression) and partly due to the awareness that it was hindering the anarchist cause.

Kropotkin recognised that the *"spate of terrorist acts"* of the 1880s had caused *"the authorities into taking repressive action against the movement"* and were *"not in his view consistent with the anarchist ideal and did little or nothing to promote popular revolt."* In addition, he was *"anxious about the isolation of the movement from the masses"* which *"had increased rather than diminished as a result of the preoccupation with"* propaganda by deed. He *"saw the best possibility for popular revolution in the . . . development of the new militancy in the labour movement. From now on he focussed his attention increasingly on the importance of revolutionary minorities working among the masses to develop the spirit of revolt."* However, even during the early 1880s when his support for individual acts of revolt (if not for propaganda by the deed) was highest, he saw the need for collective class struggle and, therefore, *"Kropotkin always insisted on the importance of the labour movement in the struggles leading up to the revolution."* [**Op. Cit.**, pp. 205-6, p. 208 and p. 280]

Kropotkin was not alone. More and more anarchists came to see "propaganda by the deed" as giving the state an excuse to clamp down on both the anarchist and labour movements. Moreover, it gave the media (and opponents of anarchism) a

> *merely one possible expression of the active citizenship on which a self-managing democracy is based . . . The social practice of promising involves the right to refuse or change commitments; similarly, the practice of self-assumed political obligation is meaningless without the practical recognition of the right of minorities to refuse or withdraw consent, or where necessary, to disobey."* [**The Problem of Political Obligation**, p. 162]

Moving beyond relationships within associations, we must highlight how different associations work together. As would be imagined, the links between associations follow the same outlines as for the associations themselves. Instead of individuals joining an association, we have associations joining confederations. The links between associations in the confederation are of the same horizontal and voluntary nature as within associations, with the same rights of "voice and exit" for members and the same rights for minorities. In this way society becomes an association of associations, a community of communities, a commune of communes, based upon maximising individual freedom by maximising participation and self-management.

The workings of such a confederation are outlined in section A.2.9 (What sort of society do anarchists want?) and discussed in greater detail in section I (What would an anarchist society look like?).

This system of direct democracy fits nicely into anarchist theory. Malatesta speaks for all anarchists when he argued that *"anarchists deny the right of the majority to govern human society in general."* As can be seen, the majority has no right to enforce itself on a minority – the minority can leave the association at any time and so, to use Malatesta's words, do not have to *"submit to the decisions of the majority before they have even heard what these might be."* [**The Anarchist Revolution**, p. 100 and p. 101] Hence, direct democracy within voluntary

association does not create "majority rule" nor assume that the minority must submit to the majority no matter what. In effect, anarchist supporters of direct democracy argue that it fits Malatesta's argument that:

> *"Certainly anarchists recognise that where life is lived in common it is often necessary for the minority to come to accept the opinion of the majority. When there is an obvious need or usefulness in doing something and, to do it requires the agreement of all, the few should feel the need to adapt to the wishes of the many . . . But such adaptation on the one hand by one group must be on the other be reciprocal, voluntary and must stem from an awareness of need and of goodwill to prevent the running of social affairs from being paralysed by obstinacy. It cannot be imposed as a principle and statutory norm. . ."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 100]

As the minority has the right to secede from the association as well as having extensive rights of action, protest and appeal, majority rule is not imposed as a principle. Rather, it is purely a decision making tool which allows minority dissent and opinion to be expressed (and acted upon) while ensuring that no minority forces its will on the majority. In other words, majority decisions are not binding on the minority. After all, as Malatesta argued:

> *"one cannot expect, or even wish, that someone who is firmly convinced that the course taken by the majority leads to disaster, should sacrifice his [or her] own convictions and passively look on, or even worse, should support a policy he [or she] considers wrong."* [**Errico Malatesta: His Life and Ideas**, p. 132]

Even the Individual Anarchist Lysander Spooner acknowledged that direct democracy has its uses when he noted that

torships is not "violence" and "terrorism" but resisting such regimes is! Similarly, non-anarchists can support repressive and authoritarian states, war and the suppression of strikes and unrest by violence ("restoring law and order") and not be considered "violent." Anarchists, in contrast, are condemned as "violent" and "terrorist" because a few of them tried to revenge such acts of oppression and state/capitalist violence! Similarly, it seems the height of hypocrisy for someone to denounce the anarchist "violence" which produces a few broken windows in, say, Seattle while supporting the actual violence of the police in imposing the state's rule or, even worse, supporting the American invasion of Iraq in 2003. If anyone should be considered violent it is the supporter of state and its actions yet people do not see the obvious and *"deplore the type of violence that the state deplores, and applaud the violence that the state practises."* [Christie and Meltzer, **The Floodgates of Anarchy**, p. 132]

It must be noted that the majority of anarchists did not support this tactic. Of those who committed "propaganda by the deed" (sometimes called *"attentats"*), as Murray Bookchin points out, only a *"few . . . were members of Anarchist groups. The majority . . . were soloists."* [**The Spanish Anarchists**, p. 102] Needless to say, the state and media painted all anarchists with the same brush. They still do, usually inaccurately (such as blaming Bakunin for such acts even though he had been dead years before the tactic was even discussed in anarchist circles or by labelling non-anarchist groups anarchists!).

All in all, the "propaganda by the deed" phase of anarchism was a failure, as the vast majority of anarchists soon came to see. Kropotkin can be considered typical. He *"never liked the slogan **propaganda by deed**, and did not use it to describe his own ideas of revolutionary action."* However, in 1879 while still *"urg[ing] the importance of collective action"* he started *"expressing considerable sympathy and interest in **attentats**"* (these *"collective forms of action"* were seen as acting *"at the trade union and communal level"*). In 1880 he *"became less preoccupied with*

as a means to encourage people to revolt by showing that their oppressors could be defeated.

Considering these reasons it is no coincidence that propaganda by the deed began in France after the 20 000-plus deaths due to the French state's brutal suppression of the Paris Commune, in which many anarchists were killed. It is interesting to note that while the anarchist violence in revenge for the Commune is relatively well known, the state's mass murder of the Communards is relatively unknown. Similarly, it may be known that the Italian Anarchist Gaetano Bresci assassinated King Umberto of Italy in 1900 or that Alexander Berkman tried to kill Carnegie Steel Corporation manager Henry Clay Frick in 1892. What is often unknown is that Umberto's troops had fired upon and killed protesting peasants or that Frick's Pinkertons had also murdered locked-out workers at Homestead.

Such downplaying of statist and capitalist violence is hardly surprising. *"The State's behaviour is violence,"* points out Max Stirner, *"and it calls its violence 'law'; that of the individual, 'crime.'"* [**The Ego and Its Own**, p. 197] Little wonder, then, that anarchist violence is condemned but the repression (and often worse violence) that provoked it ignored and forgotten. Anarchists point to the hypocrisy of the accusation that anarchists are "violent" given that such claims come from either supporters of government or the actual governments themselves, governments *"which came into being through violence, which maintain themselves in power through violence, and which use violence constantly to keep down rebellion and to bully other nations."* [Howard Zinn, **The Zinn Reader**, p. 652]

We can get a feel of the hypocrisy surrounding condemnation of anarchist violence by non-anarchists by considering their response to state violence. For example, many capitalist papers and individuals in the 1920s and 1930s celebrated Fascism as well as Mussolini and Hitler. Anarchists, in contrast, fought Fascism to the death and tried to assassinate both Mussolini and Hitler. Obviously supporting murderous dicta-

*"[a]ll, or nearly all, voluntary associations give a majority, or some other portion of the members less than the whole, the right to use some **limited** discretion as to the **means** to be used to accomplish the ends in view."* However, only the unanimous decision of a jury (which would *"judge the law, and the justice of the law"*) could determine individual rights as this *"tribunal fairly represent[s] the whole people"* as *"no law can rightfully be enforced by the association in its corporate capacity, against the goods, rights, or person of any individual, except it be such as **all** members of the association agree that it may enforce"* (his support of juries results from Spooner acknowledging that it *"would be impossible in practice"* for **all** members of an association to agree) [**Trial by Jury**, p. 130-1f, p. 134, p. 214, p. 152 and p. 132]

Thus direct democracy and individual/minority rights need not clash. In practice, we can imagine direct democracy would be used to make most decisions within most associations (perhaps with super-majorities required for fundamental decisions) plus some combination of a jury system and minority protest/direct action and evaluate/protect minority claims/rights in an anarchist society. The actual forms of freedom can only be created through practical experience by the people directly involved.

Lastly, we must stress that anarchist support for direct democracy does not mean that this solution is to be favoured in all circumstances. For example, many small associations may favour consensus decision making (see the next section on consensus and why most anarchists do not think that it is a viable alternative to direct democracy). However, most anarchists think that direct democracy within free association is the best (and most realistic) form of organisation which is consistent with anarchist principles of individual freedom, dignity and equality.

A.2.12 Is consensus an alternative to direct democracy?

The few anarchists who reject direct democracy within free associations generally support consensus in decision making. Consensus is based upon everyone on a group agreeing to a decision before it can be put into action. Thus, it is argued, consensus stops the majority ruling the minority and is more consistent with anarchist principles.

Consensus, although the "best" option in decision making, as all agree, has its problems. As Murray Bookchin points out in describing his experience of consensus, it can have authoritarian implications:

> *"In order. . . to create full consensus on a decision, minority dissenters were often subtly urged or psychologically coerced to decline to vote on a troubling issue, inasmuch as their dissent would essentially amount to a one-person veto. This practice, called 'standing aside' in American consensus processes, all too often involved intimidation of the dissenters, to the point that they completely withdrew from the decision-making process, rather than make an honourable and continuing expression of their dissent by voting, even as a minority, in accordance with their views. Having withdrawn, they ceased to be political beings–so that a 'decision' could be made. . . . 'consensus' was ultimately achieved only after dissenting members nullified themselves as participants in the process.*
>
> *"On a more theoretical level, consensus silenced that most vital aspect of all dialogue,* ***dissensus****. The ongoing dissent, the passionate dialogue that still persists even after a minority accedes temporarily to a majority decision,. . . [can be] replaced. . . .by dull*

Ireland in 2004 the media reported that anarchists were planning to use poison gas during EU related celebrations in Dublin. Of course, evidence of such a plan was not forthcoming and no such action happened. Neither did the riot the media said anarchists were organising. A similar process of misinformation accompanied the anti-capitalist May Day demonstrations in London and the protests against the Republican National Congress in New York. In spite of being constantly proved wrong after the event, the media always prints the scare stories of anarchist violence (even inventing events at, say Seattle, to justify their articles and to demonise anarchism further). Thus the myth that anarchism equals violence is perpetrated. Needless to say, the same papers that hyped the (non-existent) threat of anarchist violence remained silent on the actual violence of, and repression by, the police against demonstrators which occurred at these events. Neither did they run apologies after their (evidence-less) stories of doom were exposed as the nonsense they were by subsequent events.

This does not mean that Anarchists have not committed acts of violence. They have (as have members of other political and religious movements). The main reason for the association of terrorism with anarchism is because of the ***"propaganda by the deed"*** period in the anarchist movement.

This period – roughly from 1880 to 1900 – was marked by a small number of anarchists assassinating members of the ruling class (royalty, politicians and so forth). At its worse, this period saw theatres and shops frequented by members of the bourgeoisie targeted. These acts were termed *"propaganda by the deed."* Anarchist support for the tactic was galvanised by the assassination of Tsar Alexander II in 1881 by Russian Populists (this event prompted Johann Most's famous editorial in **Freiheit**, entitled *"At Last!"*, celebrating regicide and the assassination of tyrants). However, there were deeper reasons for anarchist support of this tactic: firstly, in revenge for acts of repression directed towards working class people; and secondly,

talist press or were instigated, if not directly perpetrated, by the police." [**Red Emma Speaks**, p. 262]

An example of this process at work can be seen from the current anti-globalisation movement. In Seattle, for example, the media reported "violence" by protestors (particularly anarchist ones) yet this amounted to a few broken windows. The much greater **actual** violence of the police against protestors (which, incidentally, started **before** the breaking of a single window) was not considered worthy of comment. Subsequent media coverage of anti-globalisation demonstrations followed this pattern, firmly connecting anarchism with violence in spite of that the protesters have been the ones to suffer the greatest violence at the hands of the state. As anarchist activist Starhawk notes, *"if breaking windows and fighting back when the cops attack is 'violence,' then give me a new word, a word a thousand times stronger, to use when the cops are beating non-resisting people into comas."* [**Staying on the Streets**, p. 130]

Similarly, at the Genoa protests in 2001 the mainstream media presented the protestors as violent even though it was the state who killed one of them and hospitalised many thousands more. The presence of police agent provocateurs in creating the violence was unmentioned by the media. As Starhawk noted afterwards, in Genoa *"we encountered a carefully orchestrated political campaign of state terrorism. The campaign included disinformation, the use of infiltrators and provocateurs, collusion with avowed Fascist groups . . . , the deliberate targeting of non-violent groups for tear gas and beating, endemic police brutality, the torture of prisoners, the political persecution of organisers . . . They did all those openly, in a way that indicates they had no fear of repercussions and expected political protection from the highest sources."* [**Op. Cit.**, pp. 128-9] This was, unsurprisingly, not reported by the media.

Subsequent protests have seen the media indulge in yet more anti-anarchist hype, inventing stories to present anarchists are hate-filled individuals planning mass violence. For example, in

> *monologues – and the uncontroverted and deadening tone of consensus. In majority decision-making, the defeated minority can resolve to overturn a decision on which they have been defeated – they are free to openly and persistently articulate reasoned and potentially persuasive disagreements. Consensus, for its part, honours no minorities, but mutes them in favour of the metaphysical 'one' of the 'consensus' group."* [*"Communalism: The Democratic Dimension of Anarchism"*, **Democracy and Nature**, no. 8, p. 8]

Bookchin does not *"deny that consensus may be an appropriate form of decision-making in small groups of people who are thoroughly familiar with one another."* But he notes that, in practical terms, his own experience has shown him that *"when larger groups try to make decisions by consensus, it usually obliges them to arrive at the lowest common intellectual denominator in their decision-making: the least controversial or even the most mediocre decision that a sizeable assembly of people can attain is adopted– precisely because everyone must agree with it or else withdraw from voting on that issue"* [**Op. Cit.**, p.7]

Therefore, due to its potentially authoritarian nature, most anarchists disagree that consensus is the political aspect of free association. While it is advantageous to try to reach consensus, it is usually impractical to do so – especially in large groups – regardless of its other, negative effects. Often it demeans a free society or association by tending to subvert individuality in the name of community and dissent in the name of solidarity. Neither true community nor solidarity are fostered when the individual's development and self-expression are aborted by public disapproval and pressure. Since individuals are all unique, they will have unique viewpoints which they should be encouraged

to express, as society evolves and is enriched by the actions and ideas of individuals.

In other words, anarchist supporters of direct democracy stress the *"**creative** role of dissent"* which, they fear, *"tends to fade away in the grey uniformity required by consensus."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 8]

We must stress that anarchists are **not** in favour of a mechanical decision making process in which the majority just vote the minority away and ignore them. Far from it! Anarchists who support direct democracy see it as a dynamic debating process in which majority and minority listen to and respect each other as far possible and create a decision which all can live with (if possible). They see the process of participation within directly democratic associations as the means of creating common interests, as a process which will encourage diversity, individual and minority expression and reduce any tendency for majorities to marginalise or oppress minorities by ensuring discussion and debate occurs on important issues.

A.2.13 Are anarchists individualists or collectivists?

The short answer is: neither. This can be seen from the fact that liberal scholars denounce anarchists like Bakunin for being "collectivists" while Marxists attack Bakunin and anarchists in general for being "individualists."

This is hardly surprising, as anarchists reject both ideologies as nonsense. Whether they like it or not, non-anarchist individualists and collectivists are two sides of the same capitalist coin. This can best shown be by considering modern capitalism, in which "individualist" and "collectivist" tendencies continually interact, often with the political and economic structure swinging from one pole to the other. Capitalist collectivism and indi-

more on this). As we have stressed earlier, freedom cannot be given, only taken. Lastly, anarchism aims for freedom. Hence Bakunin's comment that *"when one is carrying out a revolution for the liberation of humanity, one should respect the life and liberty of men [and women]."* [quoted by K.J. Kenafick, **Michael Bakunin and Karl Marx**, p. 125] For anarchists, means determine the ends and terrorism by its very nature violates life and liberty of individuals and so cannot be used to create an anarchist society. The history of, say, the Russian Revolution, confirmed Kropotkin's insight that *"[v]ery sad would be the future revolution if it could only triumph by terror."* [quoted by Millar, **Op. Cit.**, p. 175]

Moreover anarchists are **not** against individuals but the institutions and social relationships that cause certain individuals to have power over others and abuse (i.e. use) that power. Therefore the anarchist revolution is about destroying structures, not people. As Bakunin pointed out, *"we wish not to kill persons, but to abolish status and its perquisites"* and anarchism *"does not mean the death of the individuals who make up the bourgeoisie, but the death of the bourgeoisie as a political and social entity economically distinct from the working class."* [**The Basic Bakunin**, p. 71 and p. 70] In other words, ***"You can't blow up a social relationship"*** (to quote the title of an anarchist pamphlet which presents the anarchist case against terrorism).

How is it, then, that anarchism is associated with violence? Partly this is because the state and media insist on referring to terrorists who are **not** anarchists as anarchists. For example, the German Baader-Meinhoff gang were often called "anarchists" despite their self-proclaimed Marxist-Leninism. Smears, unfortunately, work. Similarly, as Emma Goldman pointed out, *"it is a known fact known to almost everyone familiar with the Anarchist movement that a great number of [violent] acts, for which Anarchists had to suffer, either originated with the capi-*

the *"uncivilised hordes"*? You cannot have it both ways and the *"unknown ideal"* of pure capitalism would be as grubby, oppressive and alienating as "actually existing" capitalism.

As such, anarchists are firmly convinced that arguments against anarchy based on the lack of ability of the mass of people are inherently self-contradictory (when not blatantly self-servicing). If people are too stupid for anarchism then they are too stupid for any system you care to mention. Ultimately, anarchists argue that such a perspective simply reflects the servile mentality produced by a hierarchical society rather than a genuine analysis of humanity and our history as a species. To quote Rousseau:

> *"when I see multitudes of entirely naked savages scorn European voluptuousness and endure hunger, fire, the sword, and death to preserve only their independence, I feel that it does not behove slaves to reason about freedom."* [quoted by Noam Chomsky, **Marxism, Anarchism, and Alternative Futures**, p. 780]

A.2.18 Do anarchists support terrorism?

No. This is for three reasons.

Terrorism means either targeting or not worrying about killing innocent people. For anarchy to exist, it must be created by the mass of people. One does not convince people of one's ideas by blowing them up. Secondly, anarchism is about self-liberation. One cannot blow up a social relationship. Freedom cannot be created by the actions of an elite few destroying rulers **on behalf of** the majority. Simply put, a *"structure based on centuries of history cannot be destroyed with a few kilos of explosives."* [Kropotkin, quoted by Martin A. Millar, **Kropotkin**, p. 174] For so long as people feel the need for rulers, hierarchy will exist (see section A.2.16 for

vidualism are both one-sided aspects of human existence, and like all manifestations of imbalance, deeply flawed.

For anarchists, the idea that individuals should sacrifice themselves for the "group" or "greater good" is nonsensical. Groups are made up of individuals, and if people think only of what's best for the group, the group will be a lifeless shell. It is only the dynamics of human interaction within groups which give them life. "Groups" cannot think, only individuals can. This fact, ironically, leads authoritarian "collectivists" to a most particular kind of "individualism," namely the *"cult of the personality"* and leader worship. This is to be expected, since such collectivism lumps individuals into abstract groups, denies their individuality, and ends up with the need for someone with enough individuality to make decisions – a problem that is "solved" by the leader principle. Stalinism and Nazism are excellent examples of this phenomenon.

Therefore, anarchists recognise that individuals are the basic unit of society and that only individuals have interests and feelings. This means they oppose "collectivism" and the glorification of the group. In anarchist theory the group exists only to aid and develop the individuals involved in them. This is why we place so much stress on groups structured in a libertarian manner – only a libertarian organisation allows the individuals within a group to fully express themselves, manage their own interests directly and to create social relationships which encourage individuality and individual freedom. So while society and the groups they join shapes the individual, the individual is the true basis of society. Hence Malatesta:

> *"Much has been said about the respective roles of individual initiative and social action in the life and progress of human societies . . . [E]verything is maintained and kept going in the human world thanks to individual initiative . . . The real being is man, the individual. Society or the collectivity - and the* ***State***

or government which claims to represent it - if it is not a hollow abstraction, must be made up of individuals. And it is in the organism of every individual that all thoughts and human actions inevitably have their origin, and from being individual they become collective thoughts and acts when they are or become accepted by many individuals. Social action, therefore, is neither the negation nor the complement of individual initiatives, but is the resultant of initiatives, thoughts and actions of all individuals who make up society . . . [T]he question is not really changing the relationship between society and the individual . . . [I]t is a question of preventing some individuals from oppressing others; of giving all individuals the same rights and the same means of action; and of replacing the initiative to the few [which Malatesta defines as a key aspect of government/hierarchy], which inevitably results in the oppression of everyone else . . . " [**Anarchy**, pp. 38-38]

These considerations do not mean that "individualism" finds favour with anarchists. As Emma Goldman pointed out, *"'rugged individualism'. . . is only a masked attempt to repress and defeat the individual and his individuality. So-called Individualism is the social and economic* ***laissez-faire****: the exploitation of the masses by the [ruling] classes by means of legal trickery, spiritual debasement and systematic indoctrination of the servile spirit . . . That corrupt and perverse 'individualism' is the straitjacket of individuality . . [It] has inevitably resulted in the greatest modern slavery, the crassest class distinctions driving millions to the breadline. 'Rugged individualism' has meant all the 'individualism' for the masters, while the people are regimented into a slave caste to serve a handful of self-seeking 'supermen.'"* [**Red Emma Speaks**, p. 112]

cratic government rather than anarchy. Democracy, as Luigi Galleani noted, means *"acknowledging the right and the competence of the people to select their rulers."* However, *"whoever has the political competence to choose his [or her] own rulers is, by implication, also competent to do without them, especially when the causes of economic enmity are uprooted."* [**The End of Anarchism?**, p. 37] Thus the argument for democracy against anarchism undermines itself, for *"if you consider these worthy electors as unable to look after their own interests themselves, how is it that they know how to choose for themselves the shepherds who must guide them? And how will they be able to solve this problem of social alchemy, of producing the election of a genius from the votes of a mass of fools?"* [Malatesta, **Anarchy**, pp. 53-4]

As for those who consider dictatorship as the solution to human stupidity, the question arises why are these dictators immune to this apparently universal human trait? And, as Malatesta noted, *"who are the best? And who will recognise these qualities in them?"* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 53] If they impose themselves on the "stupid" masses, why assume they will not exploit and oppress the many for their own benefit? Or, for that matter, that they are any more intelligent than the masses? The history of dictatorial and monarchical government suggests a clear answer to those questions. A similar argument applies for other non-democratic systems, such as those based on limited suffrage. For example, the Lockean (i.e. classical liberal or right-wing libertarian) ideal of a state based on the rule of property owners is doomed to be little more than a regime which oppresses the majority to maintain the power and privilege of the wealthy few. Equally, the idea of near universal stupidity bar an elite of capitalists (the "objectivist" vision) implies a system somewhat less ideal than the perfect system presented in the literature. This is because most people would tolerate oppressive bosses who treat them as means to an end rather than an end in themselves. For how can you expect people to recognise and pursue their own self-interest if you consider them fundamentally as

*over into the families **they** start, thus reproducing the system in more ways than one, and into politics, culture and everything else. Once you drain the vitality from people at work, they'll likely submit to hierarchy and expertise in everything. They're used to it."* [**The Abolition of Work and other essays**, pp. 21-2]

When elitists try to conceive of liberation, they can only think of it being **given** to the oppressed by kind (for Leninists) or stupid (for Objectivists) elites. It is hardly surprising, then, that it fails. Only self-liberation can produce a free society. The crushing and distorting effects of authority can only be overcome by self-activity. The few examples of such self-liberation prove that most people, once considered incapable of freedom by others, are more than up for the task.

Those who proclaim their "superiority" often do so out of fear that their authority and power will be destroyed once people free themselves from the debilitating hands of authority and come to realise that, in the words of Max Stirner, *"the great are great only because we are on our knees. Let us rise"*

As Emma Goldman remarks about women's equality, *"[t]he extraordinary achievements of women in every walk of life have silenced forever the loose talk of women's inferiority. Those who still cling to this fetish do so because they hate nothing so much as to see their authority challenged. This is the characteristic of all authority, whether the master over his economic slaves or man over women. However, everywhere woman is escaping her cage, everywhere she is going ahead with free, large strides."* [**Vision on Fire**, p. 256] The same comments are applicable, for example, to the very successful experiments in workers' self-management during the Spanish Revolution.

Then, of course, the notion that people are too stupid for anarchism to work also backfires on those who argue it. Take, for example, those who use this argument to advocate demo-

While groups cannot think, individuals cannot live or discuss by themselves. Groups and associations are an essential aspect of individual life. Indeed, as groups generate social relationships by their very nature, they help **shape** individuals. In other words, groups structured in an authoritarian way will have a negative impact on the freedom and individuality of those within them. However, due to the abstract nature of their "individualism," capitalist individualists fail to see any difference between groups structured in a libertarian manner rather than in an authoritarian one – they are both "groups". Because of their one-sided perspective on this issue, "individualists" ironically end up supporting some of the most "collectivist" institutions in existence – capitalist companies – and, moreover, always find a need for the state despite their frequent denunciations of it. These contradictions stem from capitalist individualism's dependence on individual contracts in an unequal society, i.e. **abstract** individualism.

In contrast, anarchists stress **social** "individualism" (another, perhaps better, term for this concept could be ***"communal individuality"***). Anarchism *"insists that the centre of gravity in society is the individual – that he [sic] must think for himself, act freely, and live fully. . . . If he is to develop freely and fully, he must be relieved from the interference and oppression of others. . . . [T]his has nothing in common with. . . 'rugged individualism.' Such predatory individualism is really flabby, not rugged. At the least danger to its safety, it runs to cover of the state and wails for protection. . . .Their 'rugged individualism' is simply one of the many pretences the ruling class makes to mask unbridled business and political extortion."* [Emma Goldman, **Op. Cit.**, pp. 442-3]

Anarchism rejects the **abstract** individualism of capitalism, with its ideas of "absolute" freedom of the individual which is constrained by others. This theory ignores the social context in which freedom exists and grows. *"The freedom we want,"* Malatesta argued, *"for ourselves and for others, is not an absolute meta-*

physical, abstract freedom which in practice is inevitably translated into the oppression of the weak; but it is a real freedom, possible freedom, which is the conscious community of interests, voluntary solidarity." [**Anarchy**, p. 43]

A society based on abstract individualism results in an inequality of power between the contracting individuals and so entails the need for an authority based on laws above them and organised coercion to enforce the contracts between them. This consequence is evident from capitalism and, most notably, in the "social contract" theory of how the state developed. In this theory it is assumed that individuals are "free" when they are isolated from each other, as they allegedly were originally in the "state of nature." Once they join society, they supposedly create a "contract" and a state to administer it. However, besides being a fantasy with no basis in reality (human beings have **always** been social animals), this "theory" is actually a justification for the state's having extensive powers over society; and this in turn is a justification of the capitalist system, which requires a strong state. It also mimics the results of the capitalist economic relations upon which this theory is built. Within capitalism, individuals "freely" contract together, but in practice the owner rules the worker for as long as the contract is in place. (See sections A.2.14 and B.4 for further details).

Thus anarchists reject capitalist "individualism" as being, to quote Kropotkin, *"a narrow and selfish individualism"* which, moreover, is *"a foolish egoism which belittles the individual"* and is *"not individualism at all. It will not lead to what was established as a goal; that is the complete broad and most perfectly attainable development of individuality."* The hierarchy of capitalism results in *"the impoverishment of individuality"* rather than its development. To this anarchists contrast *"the individuality which attains the greatest individual development possible through the highest communist sociability in what concerns both its primordial needs and its relationships with others in general."* [**Selected Writings on Anarchism and Revolution**, p. 295,

During the Dark Ages, for example, it was coloured by Christianity, being adapted to the needs of the Church hierarchy. The most useful "divinely revealed" dogma to the priestly elite was "original sin": the notion that human beings are basically depraved and incompetent creatures who need "direction from above," with priests as the conveniently necessary mediators between ordinary humans and "God." The idea that average people are basically stupid and thus incapable of governing themselves is a carry over from this doctrine, a relic of the Dark Ages.

In reply to all those who claim that most people are "second-handers" or cannot develop anything more than "trade union consciousness," all we can say is that it is an absurdity that cannot withstand even a superficial look at history, particularly the labour movement. The creative powers of those struggling for freedom is often truly amazing, and if this intellectual power and inspiration is not seen in "normal" society, this is the clearest indictment possible of the deadening effects of hierarchy and the conformity produced by authority. (See also section B.1 for more on the effects of hierarchy). As Bob Black points outs:

> *"You are what you do. If you do boring, stupid, monotonous work, chances are you'll end up boring, stupid, and monotonous. Work is a much better explanation for the creeping cretinisation all around us than even such significant moronising mechanisms as television and education. People who are regimented all their lives, handed to work from school and bracketed by the family in the beginning and the nursing home in the end, are habituated to hierarchy and psychologically enslaved. Their aptitude for autonomy is so atrophied that their fear of freedom is among their few rationally grounded phobias. Their obedience training at work carries*

A.2.17 Aren't most people too stupid for a free society to work?

We are sorry to have to include this question in an anarchist FAQ, but we know that many political ideologies explicitly assume that ordinary people are too stupid to be able to manage their own lives and run society. All aspects of the capitalist political agenda, from Left to Right, contain people who make this claim. Be it Leninists, fascists, Fabians or Objectivists, it is assumed that only a select few are creative and intelligent and that these people should govern others. Usually, this elitism is masked by fine, flowing rhetoric about "freedom," "democracy" and other platitudes with which the ideologues attempt to dull people's critical thought by telling them want they want to hear.

It is, of course, also no surprise that those who believe in "natural" elites always class themselves at the top. We have yet to discover an "objectivist", for example, who considers themselves part of the great mass of "second-handers" (it is always amusing to hear people who simply parrot the ideas of Ayn Rand dismissing other people so!) or who will be a toilet cleaner in the unknown "ideal" of "real" capitalism. Everybody reading an elitist text will consider him or herself to be part of the "select few." It's "natural" in an elitist society to consider elites to be natural and yourself a potential member of one!

Examination of history shows that there is a basic elitist ideology which has been the essential rationalisation of all states and ruling classes since their emergence at the beginning of the Bronze Age (*"if the legacy of domination had had any broader purpose than the support of hierarchical and class interests, it has been the attemp to exorcise the belief in public competence from social discourse itself."* [Bookchin, **The Ecology of Freedom**, p. 206]). This ideology merely changes its outer garments, not its basic inner content over time.

p. 296 and p. 297] For anarchists, our freedom is enriched by those around us when we work with them as equals and not as master and servant.

In practice, both individualism and collectivism lead to a denial of both individual liberty and group autonomy and dynamics. In addition, each implies the other, with collectivism leading to a particular form of individualism and individualism leading to a particular form of collectivism.

Collectivism, with its implicit suppression of the individual, ultimately impoverishes the community, as groups are only given life by the individuals who comprise them. Individualism, with its explicit suppression of community (i.e. the people with whom you live), ultimately impoverishes the individual, since individuals do not exist apart from society but can only exist within it. In addition, individualism ends up denying the "select few" the insights and abilities of the individuals who make up the rest of society, and so is a source of self-denial. This is Individualism's fatal flaw (and contradiction), namely *"the impossibility for the individual to attain a really full development in the conditions of oppression of the mass by the 'beautiful aristocracies'. His [or her] development would remain uni-lateral."* [Peter Kropotkin, **Anarchism**, p. 293]

True liberty and community exist elsewhere.

A.2.14 Why is voluntarism not enough?

Voluntarism means that association should be voluntary in order maximise liberty. Anarchists are, obviously, voluntarists, thinking that only in free association, created by free agreement, can individuals develop, grow, and express their liberty. However, it is evident that under capitalism voluntarism is not enough in itself to maximise liberty.

Voluntarism implies promising (i.e. the freedom to make agreements), and promising implies that individuals are

capable of independent judgement and rational deliberation. In addition, it presupposes that they can evaluate and change their actions and relationships. Contracts under capitalism, however, contradict these implications of voluntarism. For, while technically "voluntary" (though as we show in section B.4, this is not really the case), capitalist contracts result in a denial of liberty. This is because the social relationship of wage-labour involves promising to obey in return for payment. And as Carole Pateman points out, *"to promise to obey is to deny or to limit, to a greater or lesser degree, individuals' freedom and equality and their ability to exercise these capacities [of independent judgement and rational deliberation]. To promise to obey is to state, that in certain areas, the person making the promise is no longer free to exercise her capacities and decide upon her own actions, and is no longer equal, but subordinate."* [**The Problem of Political Obligation**, p. 19] This results in those obeying no longer making their own decisions. Thus the rational for voluntarism (i.e. that individuals are capable of thinking for themselves and must be allowed to express their individuality and make their own decisions) is violated in a hierarchical relationship as some are in charge and the many obey (see also section A.2.8). Thus any voluntarism which generates relationships of subordination is, by its very nature, incomplete and violates its own justification.

This can be seen from capitalist society, in which workers sell their freedom to a boss in order to live. In effect, under capitalism you are only free to the extent that you can choose whom you will obey! Freedom, however, must mean more than the right to change masters. Voluntary servitude is still servitude. For if, as Rousseau put it, sovereignty, *"for the same reason as makes it inalienable, cannot be represented"* neither can it be sold nor temporarily nullified by a hiring contract. Rousseau famously argued that the *"people of England regards itself as free; but it is grossly mistaken; it is free only during the election of members of parliament. As soon as they are elected, slavery*

tentially, be the framework of a few society. As such, the creation of libertarian institutions is, therefore, always a possibility in any situation. A peoples' experiences may push them towards anarchist conclusions, namely the awareness that the state exists to protect the wealthy and powerful few and to disempower the many. That while it is needed to maintain class and hierarchical society, it is not needed to organise society nor can it do so in a just and fair way for all. This is possible. However, without a conscious anarchist presence any libertarian tendencies are likely to be used, abused and finally destroyed by parties or religious groups seeking political power over the masses (the Russian Revolution is the most famous example of this process). It is for that reason anarchists organise to influence the struggle and spread our ideas (see section J.3 for details). For it is the case that only when anarchist ideas *"acquire a predominating influence"* and are *"accepted by a sufficiently large section of the population"* will we *"have achieved anarchy, or taken a step towards anarchy."* For anarchy *"cannot be imposed against the wishes of the people."* [Malatesta, **Op. Cit.**, p. 159 and p. 163]

So, to conclude, the creation of an anarchist society is not dependent on people being perfect but it is dependent on a large majority being anarchists and wanting to reorganise society in a libertarian manner. This will not eliminate conflict between individuals nor create a fully formed anarchist humanity overnight but it will lay the ground for the gradual elimination of whatever prejudices and anti-social behaviour that remain after the struggle to change society has revolutionised those doing it.

Faced with a large and growing anarchist movement, the ruling elite has always used repression to defend its position in society. The use of fascism in Spain (see section A.5.6) and Italy (see section A.5.5) show the depths the capitalist class can sink to. Anarchism will be created in the face of opposition by the ruling minorities and, consequently, will need to defend itself against attempts to recreate authority (see section H.2.1 for a refutation of Marxist claims anarchists reject the need to defend an anarchist society against counter-revolution).

Instead anarchists argue that we should focus our activity on convincing those subject to oppression and exploitation that they have the power to resist both and, ultimately, can end both by destroying the social institutions that cause them. As Malatesta argued, *"we need the support of the masses to build a force of sufficient strength to achieve our specific task of radical change in the social organism by the direct action of the masses, we must get closer to them, accept them as they are, and from within their ranks seek to 'push' them forward as much as possible."* [**Errico Malatesta: His Life and Ideas**, pp. 155-6] This would create the conditions that make possible a rapid evolution towards anarchism as what was initially accepted by a minority *"but increasingly finding popular expression, will make its way among the mass of the people"* and *"the minority will become the People, the great mass, and that mass rising up against property and the State, will march forward towards anarchist communism."* [Kropotkin, **Words of a Rebel**, p. 75] Hence the importance anarchists attach to spreading our ideas and arguing the case for anarchism. This creates conscious anarchists from those questioning the injustices of capitalism and the state.

This process is helped by the nature of hierarchical society and the resistance it naturally developed in those subject to it. Anarchist ideas develop spontaneously through struggle. As we discuss in section I.2.3, anarchistic organisations are often created as part of the resistance against oppression and exploitation which marks every hierarchical system and can., po-

overtakes it, and it is nothing." [**The Social Contract and Discourses**, p. 266] Anarchists expand on this analysis. To paraphrase Rousseau:

> Under capitalism the worker regards herself as free; but she is grossly mistaken; she is free only when she signs her contract with her boss. As soon as it is signed, slavery overtakes her and she is nothing but an order taker.

To see why, to see the injustice, we need only quote Rousseau:

> *"That a rich and powerful man, having acquired immense possessions in land, should impose laws on those who want to establish themselves there, and that he should only allow them to do so on condition that they accept his supreme authority and obey all his wishes; that, I can still conceive . . . Would not this tyrannical act contain a double usurpation: that on the ownership of the land and that on the liberty of the inhabitants?"* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 316]

Hence Proudhon's comment that *"Man may be made by property a slave or a despot by turns."* [**What is Property?**, p. 371] Little wonder we discover Bakunin rejecting *"any contract with another individual on any footing but the utmost equality and reciprocity"* as this would *"alienate his [or her] freedom"* and so would be a *"a relationship of voluntary servitude with another individual."* Anyone making such a contract in a free society (i.e. anarchist society) would be *"devoid of any sense of personal dignity."* [**Michael Bakunin: Selected Writings**, pp. 68-9] Only self-managed associations can create relationships of equality rather than of subordination between its members.

Therefore anarchists stress the need for direct democracy in voluntary associations in order to ensure that the concept of

"freedom" is not a sham and a justification for domination, as it is under capitalism. Only self-managed associations can create relationships of equality rather than of subordination between its members.

It is for this reason that anarchists have opposed capitalism and urged *"workers to form themselves into democratic societies, with equal conditions for all members, on pain of a relapse into feudalism."* [Proudhon, **The General Idea of the Revolution**, p. 277] For similar reasons, anarchists (with the notable exception of Proudhon) opposed marriage as it turned women into *"a bonded slave, who takes her master's name, her master's bread, her master's commands, and serves her master's passions . . . who can control no property, not even her own body, without his consent."* [Voltairine de Cleyre, *"Sex Slavery"*, **The Voltairine de Cleyre Reader**, p. 94] While marriage, due to feminist agitation, in many countries has been reformed towards the anarchist ideal of a free union of equals, it still is based on the patriarchal principles anarchists like Goldman and de Cleyre identified and condemned (see section A.3.5 for more on feminism and anarchism).

Clearly, voluntary entry is a necessary but not a sufficient condition to defend an individual's liberty. This is to be expected as it ignores (or takes for granted) the social conditions in which agreements are made and, moreover, ignores the social relationships created by them (*"For the worker who **must sell** his labour, it is impossible to remain **free.**"* [Kropotkin, **Selected Writings on Anarchism and Revolution**, p. 305]). Any social relationships based on abstract individualism are likely to be based upon force, power, and authority, **not** liberty. This of course assumes a definition of liberty according to which individuals exercise their capacities and decide their own actions. Therefore, voluntarism is **not** enough to create a society that maximises liberty. This is why anarchists think that voluntary association **must** be complemented by self-management (direct democracy) **within** these associations.

the oppressed." [Peter Kropotkin, **Act for Yourselves**, p. 85] Ideas change through struggle and, consequently, in the struggle against oppression and exploitation, we not only change the world, we change ourselves at the same time. So it is the struggle for freedom which creates people capable of taking the responsibility for their own lives, communities and planet. People capable of living as equals in a free society, so making anarchy possible.

As such, the chaos which often results when a government disappears is not anarchy nor, in fact, a case against anarchism. It simple means that the necessary preconditions for creating an anarchist society do not exist. Anarchy would be the product of collective struggle at the heart of society, not the product of external shocks. Nor, we should note, do anarchists think that such a society will appear "overnight." Rather, we see the creation of an anarchist system as a process, not an event. The ins-and-outs of how it would function will evolve over time in the light of experience and objective circumstances, not appear in a perfect form immediately (see section H.2.5 for a discussion of Marxist claims otherwise).

Therefore, anarchists do not conclude that "perfect" people are necessary anarchism to work because the anarchist is *"no liberator with a divine mission to free humanity, but he is a part of that humanity struggling onwards towards liberty."* As such, *"[i]f, then, by some external means an Anarchist Revolution could be, so to speak, supplied ready-made and thrust upon the people, it is true that they would reject it and rebuild the old society. If, on the other hand, the people develop their ideas of freedom, and they themselves get rid of the last stronghold of tyranny –- the government – then indeed the revolution will be permanently accomplished."* [George Barrett, **Op. Cit.**, p. 355]

This is not to suggest that an anarchist society must wait until ***everyone*** is an anarchist. Far from it. It is highly unlikely, for example, that the rich and powerful will suddenly see the errors of their ways and voluntarily renounce their privileges.

itarian (i.e. non-anarchist) again. This is because even if the government disappeared tomorrow, the same system would soon grow up again, because *"the strength of the government rests not with itself, but with the people. A great tyrant may be a fool, and not a superman. His strength lies not in himself, but in the superstition of the people who think that it is right to obey him. So long as that superstition exists it is useless for some liberator to cut off the head of tyranny; the people will create another, for they have grown accustomed to rely on something outside themselves."* [George Barrett, **Objections to Anarchism**, p. 355]

Hence Alexander Berkman:

> *"Our social institutions are founded on certain ideas; as long as the latter are generally believed, the institutions built on them are safe. Government remains strong because people think political authority and legal compulsion necessary. Capitalism will continue as long as such an economic system is considered adequate and just. The weakening of the ideas which support the evil and oppressive present day conditions means the ultimate breakdown of government and capitalism."* [**What is Anarchism?**, p. xii]

In other words, anarchy needs ***anarchists*** in order to be created and survive. But these anarchists need not be perfect, just people who have freed themselves, by their own efforts, of the superstition that command-and-obedience relations and capitalist property rights are necessary. The implicit assumption in the idea that anarchy needs "perfect" people is that freedom will be given, not taken; hence the obvious conclusion follows that an anarchy requiring "perfect" people will fail. But this argument ignores the need for self-activity and self-liberation in order to create a free society. For anarchists, *"history is nothing but a struggle between the rulers and the ruled, the oppressors and*

For anarchists, the assumptions of voluntarism imply self-management. Or, to use Proudhon's words, *"as individualism is the primordial fact of humanity, so association is its complementary term."* [**System of Economical Contradictions**, p. 430]

To answer the second objection first, in a society based on private property (and so statism), those with property have more power, which they can use to perpetuate their authority. *"Wealth is power, poverty is weakness,"* in the words of Albert Parsons. This means that under capitalism the much praised "freedom to choose" is extremely limited. It becomes, for the vast majority, the freedom to pick a master (under slavery, quipped Parsons, the master *"selected . . . his own slaves. Under the wage slavery system the wage slave selects his master."*). Under capitalism, Parsons stressed, *"those disinherited of their natural rights must hire out and serve and obey the oppressing class or starve. There is no other alternative. Some things are priceless, chief among which are life and liberty. A freeman [or woman] is not for sale or hire."* [**Anarchism**, p. 99 and p. 98] And why should we excuse servitude or tolerate those who desire to restrict the liberty of others? The "liberty" to command is the liberty to enslave, and so is actually a denial of liberty.

Regarding the first objection, anarchists plead guilty. We **are** prejudiced against the reduction of human beings to the status of robots. We are prejudiced in favour of human dignity and freedom. We are prejudiced, in fact, in favour of humanity and individuality.

(Section A.2.11 discusses why direct democracy is the necessary social counterpart to voluntarism (i.e. free agreement). Section B.4 discusses why capitalism cannot be based on equal bargaining power between property owners and the propertyless).

A.2.15 What about ”human nature”?

Anarchists, far from ignoring "human nature," have the only political theory that gives this concept deep thought and reflection. Too often, "human nature" is flung up as the last line of defence in an argument against anarchism, because it is thought to be beyond reply. This is not the case, however. First of all, human nature is a complex thing. If, by human nature, it is meant "what humans do," it is obvious that human nature is contradictory – love and hate, compassion and heartlessness, peace and violence, and so on, have all been expressed by people and so are all products of "human nature." Of course, what is considered "human nature" can change with changing social circumstances. For example, slavery was considered part of "human nature" and "normal" for thousands of years. Homosexuality was considered perfectly normal by the ancient Greeks yet thousands of years later the Christian church denounced it as unnatural. War only become part of "human nature" once states developed. Hence Chomsky:

> *"Individuals are certainly capable of evil . . . But individuals are capable of all sorts of things. Human nature has lots of ways of realising itself, humans have lots of capacities and options. Which ones reveal themselves depends to a large extent on the institutional structures. If we had institutions which permitted pathological killers free rein, they'd be running the place. The only way to survive would be to let those elements of your nature manifest themselves.*
>
> *"If we have institutions which make greed the sole property of human beings and encourage pure greed at the expense of other human emotions and commitments, we're going to have a society based on greed, with all that follows. A different society might be*

Obviously, though, we think that a free society will produce people who are more in tune with both their own and others individuality and needs, thus reducing individual conflict. Remaining disputes would be solved by reasonable methods, for example, the use of juries, mutual third parties, or community and workplace assemblies (see section I.5.8 for a discussion of how could be done for anti-social activities as well as disputes).

Like the "anarchism-is-against-human-nature" argument (see section A.2.15), opponents of anarchism usually assume "perfect" people – people who are not corrupted by power when placed in positions of authority, people who are strangely unaffected by the distorting effects of hierarchy, privilege, and so forth. However, anarchists make no such claims about human perfection. We simply recognise that vesting power in the hands of one person or an elite is never a good idea, as people are not perfect.

It should be noted that the idea that anarchism requires a "new" (perfect) man or woman is often raised by the opponents of anarchism to discredit it (and, usually, to justify the retention of hierarchical authority, particularly capitalist relations of production). After all, people are not perfect and are unlikely ever to be. As such, they pounce on every example of a government falling and the resulting chaos to dismiss anarchism as unrealistic. The media loves to proclaim a country to be falling into "anarchy" whenever there is a disruption in "law and order" and looting takes place.

Anarchists are not impressed by this argument. A moment's reflection shows why, for the detractors make the basic mistake of assuming an anarchist society without anarchists! (A variation of such claims is raised by the right-wing "anarcho"-capitalists to discredit real anarchism. However, their "objection" discredits their own claim to be anarchists for they implicitly assume an anarchist society without anarchists!). Needless to say, an "anarchy" made up of people who still saw the need for authority, property and statism would soon become author-

A.2.16 Does anarchism require ”perfect” people to work?

No. Anarchy is not a utopia, a "perfect" society. It will be a ***human*** society, with all the problems, hopes, and fears associated with human beings. Anarchists do not think that human beings need to be "perfect" for anarchy to work. They only need to be free. Thus Christie and Meltzer:

> *"[A] common fallacy [is] that revolutionary socialism [i.e. anarchism] is an 'idealisation' of the workers and [so] the mere recital of their present faults is a refutation of the class struggle . . . it seems morally unreasonable that a free society . . . could exist without moral or ethical perfection. But so far as the overthrow of [existing] society is concerned, we may ignore the fact of people's shortcomings and prejudices, so long as they do not become institutionalised. One may view without concern the fact . . . that the workers might achieve control of their places of work long before they had acquired the social graces of the 'intellectual' or shed all the prejudices of the present society from family discipline to xenophobia. What does it matter, so long as they can run industry without masters? Prejudices wither in freedom and only flourish while the social climate is favourable to them . . . What we say is . . . that once life can continue without imposed authority from above, and imposed authority cannot survive the withdrawal of labour from its service, the prejudices of authoritarianism will disappear. There is no cure for them other than the free process of education."* [**The Floodgates of Anarchy**, pp. 36-7]

> *organised in such a way that human feelings and emotions of other sorts, say, solidarity, support, sympathy become dominant. Then you'll have different aspects of human nature and personality revealing themselves."* [**Chronicles of Dissent**, pp. 158]

Therefore, environment plays an important part in defining what "human nature" is, how it develops and what aspects of it are expressed. Indeed, one of the greatest myths about anarchism is the idea that we think human nature is inherently good (rather, we think it is inherently sociable). How it develops and expresses itself is dependent on the kind of society we live in and create. A hierarchical society will shape people in certain (negative) ways and produce a "human nature" radically different from a libertarian one. So *"when we hear men [and women] saying that Anarchists imagine men [and women] much better than they really are, we merely wonder how intelligent people can repeat that nonsense. Do we not say continually that the only means of rendering men [and women] less rapacious and egotistic, less ambitious and less slavish at the same time, is to eliminate those conditions which favour the growth of egotism and rapacity, of slavishness and ambition?"* [Peter Kropotkin, **Act for Yourselves**, p. 83]

As such, the use of "human nature" as an argument against anarchism is simply superficial and, ultimately, an evasion. It is an excuse not to think. *"Every fool,"* as Emma Goldman put it, *"from king to policemen, from the flatheaded parson to the visionless dabbler in science, presumes to speak authoritatively of human nature. The greater the mental charlatan, the more definite his insistence on the wickedness and weakness of human nature. Yet how can any one speak of it to-day, with every soul in prison, with every heart fettered, wounded, and maimed?"* Change society, create a better social environment and then we can judge what is a product of our natures and what is the product of an authoritarian system. For this reason, anarchism *"stands for*

the liberation of the human mind from the dominion of religion; the liberation of the human body from the dominion of property; liberation from the shackles and restraint of government." For *"[f]reedom, expansion, opportunity, and above all, peace and repose, alone can teach us the real dominant factors of human nature and all its wonderful possibilities."* [**Red Emma Speaks**, p. 73]

This does not mean that human beings are infinitely plastic, with each individual born a **tabula rasa** (blank slate) waiting to be formed by "society" (which in practice means those who run it). As Noam Chomsky argues, *"I don't think its possible to give a rational account of the concept of alienated labour on that assumption [that human nature is nothing but a historical product], nor is it possible to produce something like a moral justification for the commitment to some kind of social change, except on the basis of assumptions about human nature and how modifications in the structure of society will be better able to conform to some of the fundamental needs that are part of our essential nature."* [**Language and Politics**, p. 215] We do not wish to enter the debate about what human characteristics are and are not "innate." All we will say is that human beings have an innate ability to think and learn – that much is obvious, we feel – and that humans are sociable creatures, needing the company of others to feel complete and to prosper. Moreover, they have the ability to recognise and oppose injustice and oppression (Bakunin rightly considered *"**the power to think** and **the desire to rebel**"* as *"precious faculties."* [**God and the State**, p. 9]).

These three features, we think, suggest the viability of an anarchist society. The innate ability to think for oneself automatically makes all forms of hierarchy illegitimate, and our need for social relationships implies that we can organise without the state. The deep unhappiness and alienation afflicting modern society reveals that the centralisation and authoritarianism of capitalism and the state are denying some innate needs within us. In fact, as mentioned earlier, for the great majority

life. Building upon the mainstream Russian criticism of the British Darwinism of the time, Kropotkin showed (with substantial empirical evidence) that "mutual aid" within a group or species played as important a role as "mutual struggle" between individuals within those groups or species (see Stephan Jay Gould's essay *"Kropotkin was no Crackpot"* in his book **Bully for Brontosaurus** for details and an evaluation). It was, he stressed, a *"factor"* in evolution along with competition, a factor which, in most circumstances, was far more important to survival. Thus co-operation is just as "natural" as competition so proving that "human nature" was not a barrier to anarchism as co-operation between members of a species can be the best pathway to advantage individuals.

To conclude. Anarchists argue that anarchy is not against "human nature" for two main reasons. Firstly, what is considered as being "human nature" is shaped by the society we live in and the relationships we create. This means a hierarchical society will encourage certain personality traits to dominate while an anarchist one would encourage others. As such, anarchists *"do not so much rely on the fact that human nature will change as they do upon the theory that the same nature will act differently under different circumstances."* Secondly, change *"seems to be one of the fundamental laws of existence"* so *"who can say that man [sic!] has reached the limits of his possibilities."* [George Barrett, **Objections to Anarchism**, pp. 360-1 and p. 360]

For useful discussions on anarchist ideas on human nature, both of which refute the idea that anarchists think human beings are naturally good, see Peter Marshall's *"Human nature and anarchism"* [David Goodway (ed.), **For Anarchism: History, Theory and Practice**, pp. 127-149] and David Hartley's *"Communitarian Anarchism and Human Nature"*. [**Anarchist Studies**, vol. 3, no. 2, Autumn 1995, pp. 145-164]

The sort of apologetics associated with appeals to "human nature" (or sociobiology at its worse) are natural, of course, because every ruling class needs to justify their right to rule. Hence they support doctrines that defined the latter in ways appearing to justify elite power – be it sociobiology, divine right, original sin, etc. Obviously, such doctrines have always been wrong . . . until now, of course, as it is obvious our current society truly conforms to "human nature" and it has been scientifically proven by our current scientific priesthood!

The arrogance of this claim is truly amazing. History hasn't stopped. One thousand years from now, society will be completely different from what it is presently or from what anyone has imagined. No government in place at the moment will still be around, and the current economic system will not exist. The only thing that may remain the same is that people will still be claiming that their new society is the "One True System" that completely conforms to human nature, even though all past systems did not.

Of course, it does not cross the minds of supporters of capitalism that people from different cultures may draw different conclusions from the same facts – conclusions that may be **more** valid. Nor does it occur to capitalist apologists that the theories of the "objective" scientists may be framed in the context of the dominant ideas of the society they live in. It comes as no surprise to anarchists, however, that scientists working in Tsarist Russia developed a theory of evolution based on **co-operation** within species, quite unlike their counterparts in capitalist Britain, who developed a theory based on **competitive struggle** within and between species. That the latter theory reflected the dominant political and economic theories of British society (notably competitive individualism) is pure coincidence, of course.

Kropotkin's classic work **Mutual Aid**, for example, was written in response to the obvious inaccuracies that British representatives of Darwinism had projected onto nature and human

of its existence the human race **has** lived in anarchic communities, with little or no hierarchy. That modern society calls such people "savages" or "primitive" is pure arrogance. So who can tell whether anarchism is against "human nature"? Anarchists have accumulated much evidence to suggest that it may not be.

As for the charge the anarchists demand too much of "human nature," it is often **non** anarchists who make the greatest claims on it. For *"while our opponents seem to admit there is a kind of salt of the earth – the rulers, the employers, the leaders – who, happily enough, prevent those bad men – the ruled, the exploited, the led – from becoming still worse than they are"* we anarchists *"maintain that **both** rulers and ruled are spoiled by authority"* and *"**both** exploiters and exploited are spoiled by exploitation."* So *"there is [a] difference, and a very important one. **We** admit the imperfections of human nature, but we make no exception for the rulers. **They** make it, although sometimes unconsciously, and because we make no such exception, they say that we are dreamers."* [Peter Kropotkin, **Op. Cit.**, p. 83] If human nature is so bad, then giving some people power over others and hoping this will lead to justice and freedom is hopelessly utopian.

Moreover, as noted, Anarchists argue that hierarchical organisations bring out the worse in human nature. Both the oppressor and the oppressed are negatively affected by the authoritarian relationships so produced. *"It is a characteristic of privilege and of every kind of privilege,"* argued Bakunin, *"to kill the mind and heart of man . . . That is a social law which admits no exceptions . . . It is the law of equality and humanity."* [**God and the State**, p. 31] And while the privileged become corrupted by power, the powerless (in general) become servile in heart and mind (luckily the human spirit is such that there will always be rebels no matter the oppression for where there is oppression, there is resistance and, consequently, hope). As such, it seems strange for anarchists to hear non-anarchists jus-

tify hierarchy in terms of the (distorted) "human nature" it produces.

Sadly, too many have done precisely this. It continues to this day. For example, with the rise of "sociobiology," some claim (with very little **real** evidence) that capitalism is a product of our "nature," which is determined by our genes. These claims are simply a new variation of the "human nature" argument and have, unsurprisingly, been leapt upon by the powers that be. Considering the dearth of evidence, their support for this "new" doctrine must be purely the result of its utility to those in power – i.e. the fact that it is useful to have an "objective" and "scientific" basis to rationalise inequalities in wealth and power (for a discussion of this process see **Not in Our Genes: Biology, Ideology and Human Nature** by Steven Rose, R.C. Lewontin and Leon J. Kamin).

This is not to say that it does not hold a grain of truth. As scientist Stephen Jay Gould notes, *"the range of our potential behaviour is circumscribed by our biology"* and if this is what sociobiology means *"by genetic control, then we can scarcely disagree."* However, this is not what is meant. Rather, it is a form of *"biological determinism"* that sociobiology argues for. Saying that there are specific genes for specific human traits says little for while *"[v]iolence, sexism, and general nastiness **are** biological since they represent one subset of a possible range of behaviours"* so are *"peacefulness, equality, and kindness."* And so *"we may see their influence increase if we can create social structures that permit them to flourish."* That this may be the case can be seen from the works of sociobiologists themselves, who *"acknowledge diversity"* in human cultures while *"often dismiss[ing] the uncomfortable 'exceptions' as temporary and unimportant aberrations."* This is surprising, for if you believe that *"repeated, often genocidal warfare has shaped our genetic destiny, the existence of nonaggressive peoples is embarrassing."* [**Ever Since Darwin**, p. 252, p. 257 and p. 254]

Like the social Darwinism that preceded it, sociobiology proceeds by first projecting the dominant ideas of current society onto nature (often unconsciously, so that scientists mistakenly consider the ideas in question as both "normal" and "natural"). Bookchin refers to this as *"the subtle projection of historically conditioned human values"* onto nature rather than *"scientific objectivity."* Then the theories of nature produced in this manner are transferred **back** onto society and history, being used to "prove" that the principles of capitalism (hierarchy, authority, competition, etc.) are eternal **laws,** which are then appealed to as a justification for the status quo! *"What this procedure does accomplish,"* notes Bookchin, *"is reinforce human social hierarchies by justifying the command of men and women as innate features of the 'natural order.' Human domination is thereby transcribed into the genetic code as biologically immutable."* [**The Ecology of Freedom**, p. 95 and p. 92] Amazingly, there are many supposedly intelligent people who take this sleight-of-hand seriously.

This can be seen when "hierarchies" in nature are used to explain, and so justify, hierarchies in human societies. Such analogies are misleading for they forget the institutional nature of human life. As Murray Bookchin notes in his critique of sociobiology, a *"weak, enfeebled, unnerved, and sick ape is hardly likely to become an 'alpha' male, much less retain this highly ephemeral 'status.' By contrast, the most physically and mentally pathological human rulers have exercised authority with devastating effect in the course of history."* This *"expresses a power of hierarchical **institutions** over persons that is completely reversed in so-called 'animal hierarchies' where the absence of institutions is precisely the only intelligible way of talking about 'alpha males' or 'queen bees.'"* [*"Sociobiology or Social Ecology"*, **Which way for the Ecology Movement?**, p. 58] Thus what makes human society unique is conveniently ignored and the real sources of power in society are hidden under a genetic screen.

in gigantic industrial enterprises and urban entities, the stratification and bureaucratisation of nature and human beings." Such an ecotopia *"establish entirely new eco-communities that are artistically moulded to the eco-systems in which they are located."* Echoing Kropotkin, Bookchin argues that *"[s]uch an eco-community . . . would heal the split between town and country, between mind and body by fusing intellectual with physical work, industry with agricultural in a rotation or diversification of vocational tasks."* This society would be based on the use of appropriate and green technology, a *"new kind of technology – or eco-technology – one composed of flexible, versatile machinery whose productive applications would emphasise durability and quality, not built in obsolescence, and insensate quantitative output of shoddy goods, and a rapid circulation of expendable commodities . . . Such an eco-technology would use the inexhaustible energy capacities of nature – the sun and wind, the tides and waterways, the temperature differentials of the earth and the abundance of hydrogen around us as fuels – to provide the eco-community with non-polluting materials or wastes that could be recycled."* [Bookchin, **Op. Cit.**, pp. 68-9]

However, this is not all. As Bookchin stresses an ecological society *"is more than a society that tries to check the mounting disequilibrium that exists between humanity and the natural world. Reduced to simple technical or political issues, this anaemic view of such a society's function degrades the issues raised by an ecological critique and leads them to purely technical and instrumental approaches to ecological problems. Social ecology is, first of all, a* ***sensibility*** *that includes not only a critique of hierarchy and domination but a reconstructive outlook . . . guided by an ethics that emphasises variety without structuring differences into a hierarchical order . . . the precepts for such an ethics . . . [are] participation and differentiation."* [**The Modern Crisis**, pp. 24-5]

Therefore social ecologists consider it essential to attack hierarchy and capitalism, not civilisation as such as the root cause

groups have also committed such acts. As the Freedom Group of London argued:

> *"There is a truism that the man [or woman] in the street seems always to forget, when he is abusing the Anarchists, or whatever party happens to be his* ***bete noire*** *for the moment, as the cause of some outrage just perpetrated. This indisputable fact is that homicidal outrages have, from time immemorial, been the reply of goaded and desperate classes, and goaded and desperate individuals, to wrongs from their fellowmen [and women], which they felt to be intolerable. Such acts are the violent recoil from violence, whether aggressive or repressive . . . their cause lies not in any special conviction, but in the depths of . . . human nature itself. The whole course of history, political and social, is strewn with evidence of this."* [quoted by Emma Goldman, **Op. Cit.**, p. 259]

Terrorism has been used by many other political, social and religious groups and parties. For example, Christians, Marxists, Hindus, Nationalists, Republicans, Moslems, Sikhs, Fascists, Jews and Patriots have all committed acts of terrorism. Few of these movements or ideas have been labelled as "terrorist by nature" or continually associated with violence – which shows anarchism's threat to the status quo. There is nothing more likely to discredit and marginalise an idea than for malicious and/or ill-informed persons to portray those who believe and practice it as "mad bombers" with no opinions or ideals at all, just an insane urge to destroy.

Of course, the vast majority of Christians and so on have opposed terrorism as morally repugnant and counter-productive. As have the vast majority of anarchists, at all times and places. However, it seems that in our case it is necessary to state our opposition to terrorism time and time again.

So, to summarise - only a small minority of terrorists have ever been anarchists, and only a small minority of anarchists have ever been terrorists. The anarchist movement as a whole has always recognised that social relationships cannot be assassinated or bombed out of existence. Compared to the violence of the state and capitalism, anarchist violence is a drop in the ocean. Unfortunately most people remember the acts of the few anarchists who have committed violence rather than the acts of violence and repression by the state and capital that prompted those acts.

A.2.19 What ethical views do anarchists hold?

Anarchist viewpoints on ethics vary considerably, although all share a common belief in the need for an individual to develop within themselves their own sense of ethics. All anarchists agree with Max Stirner that an individual must free themselves from the confines of existing morality and question that morality – *"I decide whether it is the **right thing** for me; there is no right **outside** me."* [**The Ego and Its Own**, p. 189]

Few anarchists, however, would go so far as Stirner and reject **any** concept of social ethics at all (saying that, Stirner does value some universal concepts although they are egoistic ones). Such extreme moral relativism is almost as bad as moral absolutism for most anarchists (moral relativism is the view that there is no right or wrong beyond what suits an individual while moral absolutism is that view that what is right and wrong is independent of what individuals think).

It is often claimed that modern society is breaking up because of excessive "egoism" or moral relativism. This is false. As far as moral relativism goes, this is a step forward from the moral absolutism urged upon society by various Moralists and

> *centuries-long tendency finds its most exacerbating development in modern capitalism. Owing to its inherently competitive nature, bourgeois society not only pits humans against each other, it also pits the mass of humanity against the natural world. Just as men are converted into commodities, so every aspect of nature is converted into a commodity, a resource to be manufactured and merchandised wantonly . . . The plundering of the human spirit by the market place is paralleled by the plundering of the earth by capital."* [**Op. Cit.**, pp. 24-5]

"Only insofar," Bookchin stresses, *"as the ecology **consciously** cultivates an anti-hierarchical and a non-domineering sensibility, structure, and strategy for social change can it retain its very **identity** as the voice for a new balance between humanity and nature and its **goal** for a truly ecological society."* Social ecologists contrast this to what Bookchin labels *"environmentalism"* for while social ecology *"seeks to eliminate the concept of the domination of nature by humanity by eliminating domination of human by human, environmentalism reflects an 'instrumentalist' or technical sensibility in which nature is viewed merely as a passive habit, an agglomeration of external objects and forces, that must be made more 'serviceable' for human use, irrespective of what these uses may be. Environmentalism . . . does not bring into question the underlying notions of the present society, notably that man must dominate nature. On the contrary, it seeks to facilitate that domination by developing techniques for diminishing the hazards caused by domination."* [Murray Bookchin, **Towards an Ecological Society**, p. 77]

Social ecology offers the vision of a society in harmony with nature, one which *"involves a fundamental reversal of all the trends that mark the historic development of capitalist technology and bourgeois society – the minute specialisation of machines and labour, the concentration of resources and people*

and individuated is circumscribed by the standardised, the regulated and the massified." [**Op. Cit.**, p. 35 and p. 26] So, in many ways, anarchism can be considered the application of ecological ideas to society, as anarchism aims to empower individuals and communities, decentralise political, social and economic power so ensuring that individuals and social life develops freely and so becomes increasingly diverse in nature. It is for this reason Brian Morris argues that *"the only political tradition that complements and, as it were, integrally connects with ecology – in a genuine and authentic way – is that of anarchism."* [**Ecology and Anarchism**, p. 132]

So what kinds of green anarchism are there? While almost all forms of modern anarchism consider themselves to have an ecological dimension, the specifically eco-anarchist thread within anarchism has two main focal points, ***Social Ecology*** and ***"primitivist"***. In addition, some anarchists are influenced by ***Deep Ecology***, although not many. Undoubtedly Social Ecology is the most influential and numerous current. Social Ecology is associated with the ideas and works of Murray Bookchin, who has been writing on ecological matters since the 1950's and, from the 1960s, has combined these issues with revolutionary social anarchism. His works include **Post-Scarcity Anarchism**, **Toward an Ecological Society**, **The Ecology of Freedom** and a host of others.

Social Ecology locates the roots of the ecological crisis firmly in relations of domination between people. The domination of nature is seen as a product of domination within society, but this domination only reaches crisis proportions under capitalism. In the words of Murray Bookchin:

> *"The notion that man must dominate nature emerges directly from the domination of man by man. . . But it was not until organic community relations. . . dissolved into market relationships that the planet itself was reduced to a resource for exploitation. This*

true-believers because it bases itself, however slimly, upon the idea of individual reason. However, as it denies the existence (or desirability) of ethics it is but the mirror image of what it is rebelling against. Neither option empowers the individual or is liberating.

Consequently, both of these attitudes hold enormous attraction to authoritarians, as a populace that is either unable to form an opinion about things (and will tolerate anything) or who blindly follow the commands of the ruling elite are of great value to those in power. Both are rejected by most anarchists in favour of an evolutionary approach to ethics based upon human reason to develop the ethical concepts and interpersonal empathy to generalise these concepts into ethical attitudes within society as well as within individuals. An anarchistic approach to ethics therefore shares the critical individual investigation implied in moral relativism but grounds itself into common feelings of right and wrong. As Proudhon argued:

> *"All progress begins by abolishing something; every reform rests upon denunciation of some abuse; each new idea is based upon the proved insufficiency of the old idea."*

Most anarchists take the viewpoint that ethical standards, like life itself, are in a constant process of evolution. This leads them to reject the various notions of *"God's Law," "Natural Law,"* and so on in favour of a theory of ethical development based upon the idea that individuals are entirely empowered to question and assess the world around them – in fact, they require it in order to be truly free. You cannot be an anarchist and blindly accept **anything**! Michael Bakunin, one of the founding anarchist thinkers, expressed this radical scepticism as so:

> *"No theory, no ready-made system, no book that has ever been written will save the world. I cleave to no system. I am a true seeker."*

Any system of ethics which is not based on individual questioning can only be authoritarian. Erich Fromm explains why:

> *"Formally, authoritarian ethics denies man's capacity to know what is good or bad; the norm giver is always an authority transcending the individual. Such a system is based not on reason and knowledge but on awe of the authority and on the subject's feeling of weakness and dependence; the surrender of decision making to the authority results from the latter's magic power; its decisions can not and must not be questioned.* ***Materially****, or according to content, authoritarian ethics answers the question of what is good or bad primarily in terms of the interests of the authority, not the interests of the subject; it is exploitative, although the subject may derive considerable benefits, psychic or material, from it."* [**Man For Himself**, p. 10]

Therefore Anarchists take, essentially, a scientific approach to problems. Anarchists arrive at ethical judgements without relying on the mythology of spiritual aid, but on the merits of their own minds. This is done through logic and reason, and is a far better route to resolving moral questions than obsolete, authoritarian systems like orthodox religion and certainly better than the "there is no wrong or right" of moral relativism.

So, what are the source of ethical concepts? For Kropotkin, *"nature has thus to be recognised as the* ***first ethical teacher of man.*** *The social instinct, innate in men as well as in all the social animals, - this is the origin of all ethical conceptions and all subsequent development of morality."* [**Ethics**, p. 45]

Life, in other words, is the basis of anarchist ethics. This means that, essentially (according to anarchists), an individual's ethical viewpoints are derived from three basic sources:

Kropotkin, were world-renowned geographers), and many others laid the foundations for the current anarchist interest in ecological issues.

However, while there are many themes of an ecological nature within classical anarchism, it is only relatively recently that the similarities between ecological thought and anarchism has come to the fore (essentially from the publication of Murray Bookchin's classic essay *"Ecology and Revolutionary Thought"* in 1965). Indeed, it would be no exaggeration to state that it is the ideas and work of Murray Bookchin that has placed ecology and ecological issues at the heart of anarchism and anarchist ideals and analysis into many aspects of the green movement.

Before discussing the types of green anarchism (also called eco-anarchism) it would be worthwhile to explain exactly **what** anarchism and ecology have in common. To quote Murray Bookchin, *"both the ecologist and the anarchist place a strong emphasis on spontaneity"* and *"to both the ecologist and the anarchist, an ever-increasing unity is achieved by growing differentiation.* ***An expanding whole is created by the diversification and enrichment of its parts.****"* Moreover, *"[j]ust as the ecologist seeks to expand the range of an eco-system and promote free interplay between species, so the anarchist seeks to expand the range of social experiments and remove all fetters to its development."* [**Post-Scarcity Anarchism**, p. 36]

Thus the anarchist concern with free development, decentralisation, diversity and spontaneity is reflected in ecological ideas and concerns. Hierarchy, centralisation, the state and concentrations of wealth reduce diversity and the free development of individuals and their communities by their very nature, and so weakens the social eco-system as well as the actual eco-systems human societies are part of. As Bookchin argues, *"the reconstructive message of ecology. . . [is that] we must conserve and promote variety"* but within modern capitalist society *"[a]ll that is spontaneous, creative*

of the development of social anarchism and key works by its leading lights, Daniel Guerin's excellent anthology **No Gods No Masters** cannot be bettered.

A.3.3 What kinds of green anarchism are there?

An emphasis on anarchist ideas as a solution to the ecological crisis is a common thread in most forms of anarchism today. The trend goes back to the late nineteenth century and the works of Peter Kropotkin and Elisee Reclus. The latter, for example, argued that a *"secret harmony exists between the earth and the people whom it nourishes, and when imprudent societies let themselves violate this harmony, they always end up regretting it."* Similarly, no contemporary ecologist would disagree with his comments that the *"truly civilised man [and women] understands that his [or her] nature is bound up with the interest of all and with that of nature. He [or she] repairs the damage caused by his predecessors and works to improve his domain."* [quoted by George Woodcock, *"Introduction"*, Marie Fleming, **The Geography of Freedom**, p. 15]

With regards Kropotkin, he argued that an anarchist society would be based on a confederation of communities that would integrate manual and brain work as well as decentralising and integrating industry and agriculture (see his classic work **Fields, Factories, and Workshops**). This idea of an economy in which *"small is beautiful"* (to use the title of E.F. Schumacher's Green classic) was proposed nearly 70 years before it was taken up by what was to become the green movement. In addition, in **Mutual Aid** Kropotkin documented how co-operation within species and between them and their environment is usually of more benefit to them than competition. Kropotkin's work, combined with that of William Morris, the Reclus brothers (both of whom, like

1) from the society an individual lives in. As Kropotkin pointed out, *"Man's conceptions of morality are completely dependent upon the form that their social life assumed at a given time in a given locality . . . this [social life] is reflected in the moral conceptions of men and in the moral teachings of the given epoch."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 315] In other words, experience of life and of living.

2) A critical evaluation by individuals of their society's ethical norms, as indicated above. This is the core of Erich Fromm's argument that *"Man must accept the responsibility for himself and the fact that only using his own powers can he give meaning to his life . . .**there is no meaning to life except the meaning man gives his life by the unfolding of his powers, by living productively.**"* [**Man for Himself**, p. 45] In other words, individual thought and development.

3) The feeling of empathy - *"the true origin of the moral sentiment . . . [is] simply in the feeling of sympathy."* [*"Anarchist Morality"*, **Anarchism**, p. 94] In other words, an individual's ability to feel and share experiences and concepts with others.

This last factor is very important for the development of a sense of ethics. As Kropotkin argued, *"[t]he more powerful your imagination, the better you can picture to yourself what any being feels when it is made to suffer, and the more intense and delicate will your moral sense be. . . And the more you are accustomed by circumstances, by those surrounding you, or by the intensity of your own thought and your imagination, to **act** as your own thought and imagination urge, the more will the moral sentiment grow in you, the more will it became habitual."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 95]

So, anarchism is based (essentially) upon the ethical maxim *"treat others as you would like them to treat you under similar cir-*

cumstances." Anarchists are neither egoists nor altruists when it come to moral stands, they are simply **human.**

As Kropotkin noted, *"egoism"* and *"altruism"* both have their roots in the same motive – *"however great the difference between the two actions in their result of humanity, the motive is the same. It is the quest for pleasure."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 85]

For anarchists, a person's sense of ethics must be developed by themselves and requires the full use of an individual's mental abilities as part of a social grouping, as part of a community. As capitalism and other forms of authority weaken the individual's imagination and reduce the number of outlets for them to exercise their reason under the dead weight of hierarchy as well as disrupting community, little wonder that life under capitalism is marked by a stark disregard for others and lack of ethical behaviour.

Combined with these factors is the role played by inequality within society. Without equality, there can be no real ethics for *"Justice implies Equality. . . only those who consider **others** as their **equals** can obey the rule: 'Do not do to others what you do not wish them to do to you.' A serf-owner and a slave merchant can evidently not recognise . . . the 'categorial imperative' [of treating people as ends in themselves and not as means] as regards serfs [or slaves] because they do not look upon them as equals."* Hence the *"greatest obstacle to the maintenance of a certain moral level in our present societies lies in the absence of social equality. Without **real** equality, the sense of justice can never be universally developed, because **Justice implies the recognition of Equality.**"* [Peter Kropotkin, **Evolution and Environment**, p. 88 and p. 79]

Capitalism, like any society, gets the ethical behaviour it deserves..

In a society which moves between moral relativism and absolutism it is little wonder that egoism becomes confused with egotism. By disempowering individuals from developing their own ethical ideas and instead encouraging blind obedience to

and community unions are enough in themselves. Syndicalists think that the anarchist and union movements can be fused into one, but most other anarchists disagree. Non-syndicalists point out the reformist nature of unionism and urge that to keep syndicalist unions revolutionary, anarchists must work within them as part of an anarchist group or federation. Most non-syndicalists consider the fusion of anarchism and unionism a source of potential **confusion** that would result in the two movements failing to do their respective work correctly. For more details on anarcho-syndicalism see section J.3.8 (and section J.3.9 on why many anarchists reject aspects of it). It should be stressed that non-syndicalist anarchists do **not** reject the need for collective struggle and organisation by workers (see section H.2.8 on that particular Marxist myth).

In practice, few anarcho-syndicalists totally reject the need for an anarchist federation, while few anarchists are totally anti-syndicalist. For example, Bakunin inspired both anarcho-communist and anarcho-syndicalist ideas, and anarcho-communists like Kropotkin, Malatesta, Berkman and Goldman were all sympathetic to anarcho-syndicalist movements and ideas.

For further reading on the various types of social anarchism, we would recommend the following: mutualism is usually associated with the works of Proudhon, collectivism with Bakunin's, communism with Kropotkin's, Malatesta's, Goldman's and Berkman's. Syndicalism is somewhat different, as it was far more the product of workers' in struggle than the work of a "famous" name (although this does not stop academics calling George Sorel the father of syndicalism, even though he wrote about a syndicalist movement that already existed. The idea that working class people can develop their own ideas, by themselves, is usually lost on them). However, Rudolf Rocker is often considered a leading anarcho-syndicalist theorist and the works of Fernand Pelloutier and Emile Pouget are essential reading to understand anarcho-syndicalism. For an overview

the future; it is they who can be easily transformed into producers associations; it is they who can make the social ingredients and the organisation of production work." [quoted by Julian P. W. Archer, **The First International in France, 1864-1872**, p. 196]

The difference between syndicalists and other revolutionary social anarchists is slight and purely revolves around the question of anarcho-syndicalist unions. Collectivist anarchists agree that building libertarian unions is important and that work within the labour movement is essential in order to ensure *"the development and organisation . . . of the social (and, by consequence, anti-political) power of the working masses."* [Bakunin, **Michael Bakunin: Selected Writings**, p. 197] Communist anarchists usually also acknowledge the importance of working in the labour movement but they generally think that syndicalistic organisations will be created by workers in struggle, and so consider encouraging the ***"spirit of revolt"*** as more important than creating syndicalist unions and hoping workers will join them (of course, anarcho-syndicalists support such autonomous struggle and organisation, so the differences are not great). Communist-anarchists also do not place as great an emphasis on the workplace, considering struggles within it to be equal in importance to other struggles against hierarchy and domination outside the workplace (most anarcho-syndicalists would agree with this, however, and often it is just a question of emphasis). A few communist-anarchists reject the labour movement as hopelessly reformist in nature and so refuse to work within it, but these are a small minority.

Both communist and collectivist anarchists recognise the need for anarchists to unite together in purely anarchist organisations. They think it is essential that anarchists work together as anarchists to clarify and spread their ideas to others. Syndicalists often deny the importance of anarchist groups and federations, arguing that revolutionary industrial

external authority (and so moral relativism once individuals think that they are without that authority's power), capitalist society ensures an impoverishment of individuality and ego. As Erich Fromm puts it:

> *"The failure of modern culture lies not in its principle of individualism, not in the idea that moral virtue is the same as the pursuit of self-interest, but in the deterioration of the meaning of self-interest; not in the fact that people are* ***too much concerned with their self-interest,*** *but that they are* ***not concerned enough with the interest of their real self; not in the fact that they are too selfish, but that they do not love themselves."*** [**Man for Himself**, p. 139]

Therefore, strictly speaking, anarchism is based upon an egoistic frame of reference - ethical ideas must be an expression of what gives us pleasure as a whole individual (both rational and emotional, reason and empathy). This leads all anarchists to reject the false division between egoism and altruism and recognise that what many people (for example, capitalists) call "egoism" results in individual self-negation and a reduction of individual self-interest. As Kropotkin argues:

> *"What was it that morality, evolving in animal and human societies, was striving for, if not for the opposition to the promptings of narrow egoism, and bringing up humanity in the spirit of the development of altruism? The very expressions 'egoism' and 'altruism' are incorrect, because there can be no pure altruism without an admixture of personal pleasure - and consequently, without egoism. It would therefore be more nearly correct to say that ethics aims at* ***the development of social habits***

> ***and the weakening of the narrowly personal habits.*** *These last make the individual lose sight of society through his regard for his own person, and therefore they even fail to attain their object, i.e. the welfare of the individual, whereas the development of habits of work in common, and of mutual aid in general, leads to a series of beneficial consequences in the family as well as society."* [**Ethics**, pp. 307-8]

Therefore anarchism is based upon the rejection of moral absolutism (i.e. *"God's Law," "Natural Law," "Man's Nature," "A is A"*) and the narrow egotism which moral relativism so easily lends itself to. Instead, anarchists recognise that there exists concepts of right and wrong which exist outside of an individual's evaluation of their own acts.

This is because of the social nature of humanity. The interactions between individuals do develop into a social maxim which, according to Kropotkin, can be summarised as *"[i]s it useful to society? Then it is good. Is it hurtful? Then it is bad."* Which acts human beings think of as right or wrong is not, however, unchanging and the *"estimate of what is useful or harmful . . . changes, but the foundation remains the same."* [*"Anarchist Morality"*, **Op. Cit.**, p. 91 and p. 92]

This sense of empathy, based upon a critical mind, is the fundamental basis of social ethics - the 'what-should-be' can be seen as an ethical criterion for the truth or validity of an objective 'what-is.' So, while recognising the root of ethics in nature, anarchists consider ethics as fundamentally a **human** idea - the product of life, thought and evolution created by individuals and generalised by social living and community.

So what, for anarchists, is unethical behaviour? Essentially anything that denies the most precious achievement of history: the liberty, uniqueness and dignity of the individual.

Individuals can see what actions are unethical because, due to empathy, they can place themselves into the position of

enough to overthrow it. In many ways anarcho-syndicalism can be considered as a new version of collectivist-anarchism, which also stressed the importance of anarchists working within the labour movement and creating unions which prefigure the future free society.

Thus, even under capitalism, anarcho-syndicalists seek to create *"free associations of free producers."* They think that these associations would serve as *"a practical school of anarchism"* and they take very seriously Bakunin's remark that the workers' organisations must create *"not only the ideas but also the facts of the future itself"* in the pre-revolutionary period.

Anarcho-syndicalists, like all social anarchists, *"are convinced that a Socialist economic order cannot be created by the decrees and statutes of a government, but only by the solidaric collaboration of the workers with hand and brain in each special branch of production; that is, through the taking over of the management of all plants by the producers themselves under such form that the separate groups, plants, and branches of industry are independent members of the general economic organism and systematically carry on production and the distribution of the products in the interest of the community on the basis of free mutual agreements."* [Rudolf Rocker, **Anarcho-syndicalism**, p. 55]

Again, like all social anarchists, anarcho-syndicalists see the collective struggle and organisation implied in unions as the school for anarchism. As Eugene Varlin (an anarchist active in the First International who was murdered at the end of the Paris Commune) put it, unions have *"the enormous advantage of making people accustomed to group life and thus preparing them for a more extended social organisation. They accustom people not only to get along with one another and to understand one another, but also to organise themselves, to discuss, and to reason from a collective perspective."* Moreover, as well as mitigating capitalist exploitation and oppression in the here and now, the unions also *"form the natural elements of the social edifice of*

which all necessaries for production are owned in common by the labour groups and the free communes, while the ways of retribution [i.e. distribution] of labour, communist or otherwise, would be settled by each group for itself." [**Anarchism**, p. 295] Thus, while communism and collectivism both organise production in common via producers' associations, they differ in how the goods produced will be distributed. Communism is based on free consumption of all while collectivism is more likely to be based on the distribution of goods according to the labour contributed. However, most anarcho-collectivists think that, over time, as productivity increases and the sense of community becomes stronger, money will disappear. Both agree that, in the end, society would be run along the lines suggested by the communist maxim: ***"From each according to their abilities, to each according to their needs."*** They just disagree on how quickly this will come about (see section I.2.2).

For anarcho-communists, they think that *"communism – at least partial – has more chances of being established than collectivism"* after a revolution. [**Op. Cit.**, p. 298] They think that moves towards communism are essential as collectivism *"begins by abolishing private ownership of the means of production and immediately reverses itself by returning to the system of remuneration according to work performed which means the reintroduction of inequality."* [Alexander Berkman, **What is Anarchism?**, p. 230] The quicker the move to communism, the less chances of new inequalities developing. Needless to say, these positions are **not** that different and, in practice, the necessities of a social revolution and the level of political awareness of those introducing anarchism will determine which system will be applied in each area.

Syndicalism is the other major form of social anarchism. Anarcho-syndicalists, like other syndicalists, want to create an industrial union movement based on anarchist ideas. Therefore they advocate decentralised, federated unions that use direct action to get reforms under capitalism until they are strong

those suffering the behaviour. Acts which restrict individuality can be considered unethical for two (interrelated) reasons.

Firstly, the protection and development of individuality in all enriches the life of every individual and it gives pleasure to individuals because of the diversity it produces. This egoist basis of ethics reinforces the second (social) reason, namely that individuality is good for society for it enriches the community and social life, strengthening it and allowing it to grow and evolve. As Bakunin constantly argued, progress is marked by a movement from *"the simple to the complex"* or, in the words of Herbert Read, it *"is measured by the degree of differentiation within a society. If the individual is a unit in a corporate mass, his [or her] life will be limited, dull, and mechanical. If the individual is a unit on his [or her] own, with space and potentiality for separate action . . .he can develop - develop in the only real meaning of the word - develop in consciousness of strength, vitality, and joy."* [*"The Philosophy of Anarchism,"* **Anarchy and Order**, p. 37]

This defence of individuality is learned from nature. In an ecosystem, diversity is strength and so biodiversity becomes a source of basic ethical insight. In its most basic form, it provides a guide to *"help us distinguish which of our actions serve the thrust of natural evolution and which of them impede them."* [Murray Bookchin, **The Ecology of Freedom**, p. 442]

So, the ethical concept *"lies in the feeling of sociality, inherent in the entire animal world and in the conceptions of equity, which constitutes one of the fundamental primary judgements of human reason."* Therefore anarchists embrace *"the permanent presence of a **double tendency** - towards greater development on the one side, of **sociality**, and, on the other side, of a consequent increase of the intensity of life which results in an increase of happiness for the **individuals**, and in progress - physical, intellectual, and moral."* [Kropotkin, **Ethics**, pp. 311-2 and pp. 19-20]

Anarchist attitudes to authority, the state, capitalism, private property and so on all come from our ethical belief that the liberty of individuals is of prime concern and that our ability to empathise with others, to see ourselves in others (our basic equality and common individuality, in other words).

Thus anarchism combines the subjective evaluation by individuals of a given set of circumstances and actions with the drawing of objective interpersonal conclusions of these evaluations based upon empathic bounds and discussion between equals. Anarchism is based on a humanistic approach to ethical ideas, one that evolves along with society and individual development. Hence an **ethical** society is one in which *"[d]ifference among people will be respected, indeed fostered, as elements that enrich the unity of experience and phenomenon . . . [the different] will be conceived of as individual parts of a whole all the richer because of its complexity."* [Murray Bookchin, **Post Scarcity Anarchism**, p. 82]

A.2.20 Why are most anarchists atheists?

It is a fact that most anarchists are atheists. They reject the idea of god and oppose all forms of religion, particularly organised religion. Today, in secularised western European countries, religion has lost its once dominant place in society. This often makes the militant atheism of anarchism seem strange. However, once the negative role of religion is understood the importance of libertarian atheism becomes obvious. It is because of the role of religion and its institutions that anarchists have spent some time refuting the idea of religion as well as propagandising against it.

So why do so many anarchists embrace atheism? The simplest answer is that most anarchists are atheists because it is a logical extension of anarchist ideas. If anarchism is the rejection of illegitimate authorities, then it follows that it is the

property of each of these groups and which will by a reciprocal contract become the collective property of the whole . . . federation. In this way, the federation of groups will be able to . . . regulate the rate of production to meet the fluctuating needs of society." [James Guillaume, **Bakunin on Anarchism**, p. 376]

These anarchists share the mutualists support for workers' self-management of production within co-operatives but see confederations of these associations as being the focal point for expressing mutual aid, not a market. Workplace autonomy and self-management would be the basis of any federation, for *"the workers in the various factories have not the slightest intention of handing over their hard-won control of the tools of production to a superior power calling itself the 'corporation.'"* [Guillaume, **Op. Cit.**, p. 364] In addition to this industry-wide federation, there would also be cross-industry and community confederations to look after tasks which are not within the exclusive jurisdiction or capacity of any particular industrial federation or are of a social nature. Again, this has similarities to Proudhon's mutualist ideas.

Social anarchists share a firm commitment to common ownership of the means of production (excluding those used purely by individuals) and reject the individualist idea that these can be "sold off" by those who use them. The reason, as noted earlier, is because if this could be done, capitalism and statism could regain a foothold in the free society. In addition, other social anarchists do not agree with the mutualist idea that capitalism can be reformed into libertarian socialism by introducing mutual banking. For them capitalism can only be replaced by a free society by social revolution.

The major difference between collectivists and communists is over the question of "money" after a revolution. Anarcho-communists consider the abolition of money to be essential, while anarcho-collectivists consider the end of private ownership of the means of production to be the key. As Kropotkin noted, collectivist anarchism *"express[es] a state of things in*

to be buttressed by economic right." Thus the agro-industrial federation would be required to ensure the anarchist nature of society from the destabilising effects of market exchanges (which can generate increasing inequalities in wealth and so power). Such a system would be a practical example of solidarity, as *"industries are sisters; they are parts of the same body; one cannot suffer without the others sharing in its suffering. They should therefore federate, not to be absorbed and confused together, but in order to guarantee mutually the conditions of common prosperity . . . Making such an agreement will not detract from their liberty; it will simply give their liberty more security and force."* [**The Principle of Federation**, p. 70, p. 67 and p. 72]

The other forms of social anarchism do not share the mutualists support for markets, even non-capitalist ones. Instead they think that freedom is best served by communalising production and sharing information and products freely between co-operatives. In other words, the other forms of social anarchism are based upon common (or social) ownership by federations of producers' associations and communes rather than mutualism's system of individual co-operatives. In Bakunin's words, the *"future social organisation must be made solely from the bottom upwards, by the free association or federation of workers, firstly in their unions, then in the communes, regions, nations and finally in a great federation, international and universal"* and *"the land, the instruments of work and all other capital may become the collective property of the whole of society and be utilised only by the workers, in other words by the agricultural and industrial associations."* [**Michael Bakunin: Selected Writings**, p. 206 and p. 174] Only by extending the principle of co-operation beyond individual workplaces can individual liberty be maximised and protected (see section I.1.3 for why most anarchists are opposed to markets). In this they share some ground with Proudhon, as can be seen. The industrial confederations would *"guarantee the mutual use of the tools of production which are the*

rejection of the so-called Ultimate Authority, God. Anarchism is grounded in reason, logic, and scientific thinking, not religious thinking. Anarchists tend to be sceptics, and not believers. Most anarchists consider the Church to be steeped in hypocrisy and the Bible a work of fiction, riddled with contradictions, absurdities and horrors. It is notorious in its debasement of women and its sexism is infamous. Yet men are treated little better. Nowhere in the bible is there an acknowledgement that human beings have inherent rights to life, liberty, happiness, dignity, fairness, or self-government. In the bible, humans are sinners, worms, and slaves (figuratively and literally, as it condones slavery). God has all the rights, humanity is nothing.

This is unsurprisingly, given the nature of religion. Bakunin put it best:

> ***"The idea of God implies the abdication of human reason and justice; it is the most decisive negation of human liberty, and necessarily ends in the enslavement of mankind, both in theory and in practice.***
>
> *"Unless, then, we desire the enslavement and degradation of mankind . . . we may not, must not make the slightest concession either to the God of theology or to the God of metaphysics. He who, in this mystical alphabet, begins with A will inevitably end with Z; he who desires to worship God must harbour no childish illusions about the matter, but bravely renounce his liberty and humanity.*
>
> *"If God is, man is a slave; now, man can and must be free; then, God does not exist."* [**God and the State**, p. 25]

For most anarchists, then, atheism is required due to the nature of religion. *"To proclaim as divine all that is grand, just, noble, and beautiful in humanity,"* Bakunin argued, *"is to tacitly*

admit that humanity of itself would have been unable to produce it – that is, that, abandoned to itself, its own nature is miserable, iniquitous, base, and ugly. Thus we come back to the essence of all religion – in other words, to the disparagement of humanity for the greater glory of divinity." As such, to do justice to our humanity and the potential it has, anarchists argue that we must do without the harmful myth of god and all it entails and so on behalf of *"human liberty, dignity, and prosperity, we believe it our duty to recover from heaven the goods which it has stolen and return them to earth."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 37 and p. 36]

As well as the theoretical degrading of humanity and its liberty, religion has other, more practical, problems with it from an anarchist point of view. Firstly, religions have been a source of inequality and oppression. Christianity (like Islam), for example, has always been a force for repression whenever it holds any political or social sway (believing you have a direct line to god is a sure way of creating an authoritarian society). The Church has been a force of social repression, genocide, and the justification for every tyrant for nearly two millennia. When given the chance it has ruled as cruelly as any monarch or dictator. This is unsurprising:

> *"God being everything, the real world and man are nothing. God being truth, justice, goodness, beauty, power and life, man is falsehood, iniquity, evil, ugliness, impotence, and death. God being master, man is the slave. Incapable of finding justice, truth, and eternal life by his own effort, he can attain them only through a divine revelation. But whoever says revelation, says revealers, messiahs, prophets, priests, and legislators inspired by God himself; and these, as the holy instructors of humanity, chosen by God himself to direct it in the path of salvation, necessarily exercise absolute power. All men owe them passive and unlimited obedience; for against the divine reason*

A.3.2 Are there different types of social anarchism?

Yes. Social anarchism has four major trends – mutualism, collectivism, communism and syndicalism. The differences are not great and simply involve differences in strategy. The one major difference that does exist is between mutualism and the other kinds of social anarchism. Mutualism is based around a form of market socialism – workers' co-operatives exchanging the product of their labour via a system of community banks. This mutual bank network would be *"formed by the whole community, not for the especial advantage of any individual or class, but for the benefit of all . . . [with] no interest . . . exacted on loans, except enough to cover risks and expenses."* Such a system would end capitalist exploitation and oppression for by *"introducing mutualism into exchange and credit we introduce it everywhere, and labour will assume a new aspect and become truly democratic."* [Charles A. Dana, **Proudhon and his *"Bank of the People"***, pp. 44-45 and p. 45]

The social anarchist version of mutualism differs from the individualist form by having the mutual banks owned by the local community (or commune) instead of being independent co-operatives. This would ensure that they provided investment funds to co-operatives rather than to capitalistic enterprises. Another difference is that some social anarchist mutualists support the creation of what Proudhon termed an ***"agro-industrial federation"*** to complement the federation of libertarian communities (called communes by Proudhon). This is a *"confederation . . . intended to provide reciprocal security in commerce and industry"* and large scale developments such as roads, railways and so on. The purpose of *"specific federal arrangements is to protect the citizens of the federated states [sic!] from capitalist and financial feudalism, both within them and from the outside."* This is because *"political right requires*

or family group to own more than strictly required for their normal upkeep." [*"Mini-Manual of the Anarchist Individualist"*, pp. 145-9, **Anarchism**, Robert Graham (ed.), p. 147 and pp. 147-8]

The ideas of the American individualist anarchists logically flow to the same conclusions. "Occupancy and Use" automatically excludes wage labour and so exploitation and oppression. As Wm. Gary Kline correctly points out, the US Individualist anarchists *"expected a society of largely self-employed workmen with no significant disparity of wealth between any of them."* [**The Individualist Anarchists**, p. 104] It is this vision of a self-employed society that logically flows from their principles which ensures that their ideas are truly anarchist. As it is, their belief that their system would ensure the elimination of profit, rent and interest place them squarely in the anti-capitalist camp alongside social anarchists.

Needless to say, social anarchists disagree with individualist anarchism, arguing that there are undesirable features of even non-capitalist markets which would undermine freedom and equality. Moreover, the development of industry has resulted in **natural** barriers of entry into markets and this not only makes it almost impossible to abolish capitalism by competing against it, it also makes the possibility of recreating usury in new forms likely. Combine this with the difficulty in determining the exact contribution of each worker to a product in a modern economy and you see why social anarchists argue that the only real solution to capitalism is to ensure community ownership and management of the economy. It is this recognition of the developments within the capitalist economy which make social anarchists reject individualist anarchism in favour of communalising, and so decentralising, production by freely associated and co-operative labour on a large-scale rather than just in the workplace.

For more discussion on the ideas of the Individualist anarchists, and why social anarchists reject them, see section G – "Is individualist anarchism capitalistic?"

> *there is no human reason, and against the justice of God no terrestrial justice holds."* [Bakunin, **Op. Cit.**, p. 24]

Christianity has only turned tolerant and peace-loving when it is powerless and even then it has continued its role as apologist for the powerful. This is the second reason why anarchists oppose the church for when not being the source of oppression, the church has justified it and ensured its continuation. It has kept the working class in bondage for generations by sanctioning the rule of earthly authorities and teaching working people that it is wrong to fight against those same authorities. Earthly rulers received their legitimisation from the heavenly lord, whether political (claiming that rulers are in power due to god's will) or economic (the rich having been rewarded by god). The bible praises obedience, raising it to a great virtue. More recent innovations like the Protestant work ethic also contribute to the subjugation of working people.

That religion is used to further the interests of the powerful can quickly be seen from most of history. It conditions the oppressed to humbly accept their place in life by urging the oppressed to be meek and await their reward in heaven. As Emma Goldman argued, Christianity (like religion in general) *"contains nothing dangerous to the regime of authority and wealth; it stands for self-denial and self-abnegation, for penance and regret, and is absolutely inert in the face of every [in]dignity, every outrage imposed upon mankind."* [**Red Emma Speaks**, p. 234]

Thirdly, religion has always been a conservative force in society. This is unsurprising, as it bases itself not on investigation and analysis of the real world but rather in repeating the truths handed down from above and contained in a few holy books. Theism is then *"the theory of speculation"* while atheism is *"the science of demonstration."* The *"one hangs in the metaphysical clouds of the Beyond, while the other has its roots firmly in the soil. It is the earth, not heaven, which man must rescue if he is*

truly to be saved." Atheism, then, *"expresses the expansion and growth of the human mind"* while theism *"is static and fixed."* It is *"the absolutism of theism, its pernicious influence upon humanity, its paralysing effect upon thought and action, which Atheism is fighting with all its power."* [Emma Goldman, **Op. Cit.**, p. 243, p. 245 and pp. 246-7]

As the Bible says, *"By their fruits shall ye know them."* We anarchists agree but unlike the church we apply this truth to religion as well. That is why we are, in the main, atheists. We recognise the destructive role played by the Church, and the harmful effects of organised monotheism, particularly Christianity, on people. As Goldman summaries, religion *"is the conspiracy of ignorance against reason, of darkness against light, of submission and slavery against independence and freedom; of the denial of strength and beauty, against the affirmation of the joy and glory of life."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 240]

So, given the fruits of the Church, anarchists argue that it is time to uproot it and plant new trees, the trees of reason and liberty.

That said, anarchists do not deny that religions contain important ethical ideas or truths. Moreover, religions can be the base for strong and loving communities and groups. They can offer a sanctuary from the alienation and oppression of everyday life and offer a guide to action in a world where everything is for sale. Many aspects of, say, Jesus' or Buddha's life and teachings are inspiring and worth following. If this were not the case, if religions were simply a tool of the powerful, they would have long ago been rejected. Rather, they have a dual-nature in that contain both ideas necessary to live a good life as well as apologetics for power. If they did not, the oppressed would not believe and the powerful would suppress them as dangerous heresies.

And, indeed, repression has been the fate of any group that has preached a radical message. In the middle ages numerous revolutionary Christian movements and sects were crushed

operatives, workers will be exploited for *"it is well enough to talk of [the worker] buying hand tools, or small machinery which can be moved about; but what about the gigantic machinery necessary to the operation of a mine, or a mill? It requires many to work it. If one owns it, will he not make the others pay tribute for using it?"* This is because *"no man would employ another to work for him unless he could get more for his product than he had to pay for it, and that being the case, the inevitable course of exchange and re-exchange would be that the man* ***having received less than the full amount."*** [Voltairine de Cleyre, *"Why I am an Anarchist"*, **Exquisite Rebel**, p. 61 and p. 60] Only when the people who use a resource own it can individual ownership not result in hierarchical authority or exploitation (i.e. statism/capitalism). Only when an industry is co-operatively owned, can the workers ensure that they govern themselves during work and can get the full value of the goods they make once they are sold.

This solution is the one Individualist Anarchists ***do*** seem to accept and the only one consistent with all their declared principles (as well as anarchism). This can be seen when French individualist E. Armand argued that the key difference between his school of anarchism and communist-anarchism is that as well as seeing *"ownership of the consumer goods representing an extension of [the worker's] personality"* it also *"regards ownership of the means of production and free disposal of his produce as the quintessential guarantee of the autonomy of the individual. The understanding is that such ownership boils down to the chance to deploy (as individuals, couples, family groups, etc.) the requisite plot of soil or machinery of production to meet the requirements of the social unit, provided that the proprietor does not transfer it to someone else or reply upon the services of someone else in operating it."* Thus the individualist anarchist could *"defend himself against . . . the exploitation of anyone by one of his neighbours who will set him to work in his employ and for his benefit"* and *"greed, which is to say the opportunity for an individual, couple*

actions of the latter just as the state rules the citizen or subject. In other words, individual ownership produces the same social relationships as that created by the state, as it comes from the same source (monopoly of power over a given area and those who use it).

Social anarchists argue that the Individualist Anarchists acceptance of individual ownership and their individualistic conception of individual freedom can lead to the denial of individual freedom by the creation of social relationships which are essentially authoritarian/statist in nature. *"The individualists,"* argued Malatesta, *"give the greatest importance to an abstract concept of freedom and fail to take into account, or dwell on the fact that real, concrete freedom is the outcome of solidarity and voluntary co-operation."* [**The Anarchist Revolution**, p. 16] Thus wage labour, for example, places the worker in the same relationship to the boss as citizenship places the citizen to the state, namely of one of domination and subjection. Similarly with the tenant and the landlord.

Such a social relationship cannot help but produce the other aspects of the state. As Albert Meltzer points out, this can have nothing but statist implications, because *"the school of Benjamin Tucker – by virtue of their individualism – accepted the need for police to break strikes so as to guarantee the employer's 'freedom.' All this school of so-called Individualists accept . . . the necessity of the police force, hence for government, and the prime definition of anarchism is* ***no government.***" [**Anarchism: Arguments For and Against**, p. 8] It is partly for this reason social anarchists support social ownership as the best means of protecting individual liberty.

Accepting individual ownership this problem can only be "got round" by accepting, along with Proudhon (the source of many of Tucker's economic ideas), the need for co-operatives to run workplaces that require more than one worker. This naturally complements their support for "occupancy and use" for land, which would effectively abolish landlords. Without co-

by the earthly powers that be with the firm support of the mainstream church. During the Spanish Civil War the Catholic church supported Franco's fascists, denouncing the killing of pro-Franco priests by supporters of the republic while remaining silent about Franco's murder of Basque priests who had supported the democratically elected government (Pope John Paul II is seeking to turn the dead pro-Franco priests into saints while the pro-Republican priests remain unmentioned). The Archbishop of El Salvador, Oscar Arnulfo Romero, started out as a conservative but after seeing the way in which the political and economic powers were exploiting the people became their outspoken champion. He was assassinated by right-wing paramilitaries in 1980 because of this, a fate which has befallen many other supporters of liberation theology, a radical interpretation of the Gospels which tries to reconcile socialist ideas and Christian social thinking.

Nor does the anarchist case against religion imply that religious people do not take part in social struggles to improve society. Far from it. Religious people, including members of the church hierarchy, played a key role in the US civil rights movement of the 1960s. The religious belief within Zapata's army of peasants during the Mexican revolution did not stop anarchists taking part in it (indeed, it had already been heavily influenced by the ideas of anarchist militant Ricardo Flores Magon). It is the dual-nature of religion which explains why many popular movements and revolts (particularly by peasants) have used the rhetoric of religion, seeking to keep the good aspects of their faith will fighting the earthly injustice its official representatives sanctify. For anarchists, it is the willingness to fight against injustice which counts, not whether someone believes in god or not. We just think that the social role of religion is to dampen down revolt, not encourage it. The tiny number of radical priests compared to those in the mainstream or on the right suggests the validity of our analysis.

It should be stressed that anarchists, while overwhelmingly hostile to the idea of the Church and an established religion, do not object to people practising religious belief on their own or in groups, so long as that practice doesn't impinge on the liberties of others. For example, a cult that required human sacrifice or slavery would be antithetical to anarchist ideas, and would be opposed. But peaceful systems of belief could exist in harmony within in anarchist society. The anarchist view is that religion is a personal matter, above all else – if people want to believe in something, that's their business, and nobody else's as long as they do not impose those ideas on others. All we can do is discuss their ideas and try and convince them of their errors.

To end, it should noted that we are not suggesting that atheism is somehow mandatory for an anarchist. Far from it. As we discuss in section A.3.7, there are anarchists who do believe in god or some form of religion. For example, Tolstoy combined libertarian ideas with a devote Christian belief. His ideas, along with Proudhon's, influences the Catholic Worker organisation, founded by anarchists Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin in 1933 and still active today. The anarchist activist Starhawk, active in the current anti-globalisation movement, has no problems also being a leading Pagan. However, for most anarchists, their ideas lead them logically to atheism for, as Emma Goldman put it, *"in its negation of gods is at the same time the strongest affirmation of man, and through man, the eternal yea to life, purpose, and beauty."* [**Red Emma Speaks**, p. 248]

Moreover, for social anarchists, the idea that the means of production can be sold implies that private property could be reintroduced in an anarchist society. In a free market, some succeed and others fail. As Proudhon argued, in competition victory goes to the strongest. When one's bargaining power is weaker than another then any "free exchange" will benefit the stronger party. Thus the market, even a non-capitalist one, will tend to magnify inequalities of wealth and power over time rather than equalising them. Under capitalism this is more obvious as those with only their labour power to sell are in a weaker position than those with capital but individualist anarchism would also be affected.

Thus, social anarchists argue, much against its will an individualist anarchist society would evolve away from fair exchanges back into capitalism. If, as seems likely, the "unsuccessful" competitors are forced into unemployment they may have to sell their labour to the "successful" in order to survive. This would create authoritarian social relationships and the domination of the few over the many via "free contracts." The enforcement of such contracts (and others like them), in all likelihood, *"opens . . . the way for reconstituting under the heading of 'defence' all the functions of the State."* [Peter Kropotkin, **Anarchism**, p. 297]

Benjamin Tucker, the anarchist most influenced by liberalism and free market ideas, also faced the problems associated with all schools of abstract individualism – in particular, the acceptance of authoritarian social relations as an expression of "liberty." This is due to the similarity of property to the state. Tucker argued that the state was marked by two things, aggression and *"the assumption of authority over a given area and all within it, exercised generally for the double purpose of more complete oppression of its subjects and extension of its boundaries."* [**Instead of a Book**, p. 22] However, the boss and landlord also has authority over a given area (the property in question) and all within it (workers and tenants). The former control the

in the "use rights" system both are based in (see section I.6.2 for a full discussion). In addition, for social anarchists an association exists solely for the benefit of the individuals that compose it; it is the means by which people co-operate to meet their common needs. Therefore, **all** anarchists emphasise the importance of free agreement as the basis of an anarchist society. Thus all anarchists agree with Bakunin:

> *"Collectivism could only imposed only on slaves, and this kind of collectivism would then be the negation of humanity. In a free community, collectivism can only come about through the pressure of circumstances, not by imposition from above but by a free spontaneous movement from below."* [**Bakunin on Anarchism**, p. 200]

If individualists desire to work for themselves and exchange goods with others, social anarchists have no objection. Hence our comments that the two forms of anarchism are not mutually exclusive. Social anarchists support the right of individuals **not** to join a commune while Individualist Anarchists support the rights of individuals to pool their possessions as they see fit, including communistic associations. However, if, in the name of freedom, an individual wished to claim property rights so as to exploit the labour of others, social anarchists would quickly resist this attempt to recreate statism in the name of "liberty." Anarchists do not respect the "freedom" to be a ruler! In the words of Luigi Galleani:

> *"No less sophistical is the tendency of those who, under the comfortable cloak of anarchist individualism, would welcome the idea of domination . . . But the heralds of domination presume to practice individualism in the name of their ego, over the obedient, resigned, or inert ego of others."* [**The End of Anarchism?**, p. 40]

A.3 What types of anarchism are there?

One thing that soon becomes clear to any one interested in anarchism is that there is not one single form of anarchism. Rather, there are different schools of anarchist thought, different types of anarchism which have many disagreements with each other on numerous issues. These types are usually distinguished by tactics and/or goals, with the latter (the vision of a free society) being the major division.

This means that anarchists, while all sharing a few key ideas, can be grouped into broad categories, depending on the economic arrangements that they consider to be most suitable to human freedom. However, all types of anarchists share a basic approach. To quote Rudolf Rocker:

> *"In common with the founders of Socialism, Anarchists demand the abolition of all economic monopolies and the common ownership of the soil and all other means of production, the use of which must be available to all without distinction; for personal and social freedom is conceivable only on the basis of equal economic advantages for everybody. Within the Socialist movement itself the Anarchists represent the viewpoint that the war against capitalism must be at the same time a war against all institutions of political power, for in history economic exploitation has always gone hand in hand with political and social oppression. The exploitation of man*

by man and the domination of man over man are inseparable, and each is the condition of the other." [**Anarcho-Syndicalism**, pp. 62-3]

It is within this general context that anarchists disagree. The main differences are between ***"individualist"*** and ***"social"*** anarchists, although the economic arrangements each desire are not mutually exclusive. Of the two, social anarchists (communist-anarchists, anarcho-syndicalists and so on) have always been the vast majority, with individualist anarchism being restricted mostly to the United States. In this section we indicate the differences between these main trends within the anarchist movement. As will soon become clear, while social and individualist anarchists both oppose the state and capitalism, they disagree on the nature of a free society (and how to get there). In a nutshell, social anarchists prefer communal solutions to social problems and a communal vision of the good society (i.e. a society that protects and encourages individual freedom). Individualist anarchists, as their name suggests, prefer individual solutions and have a more individualistic vision of the good society. However, we must not let these difference cloud what both schools have in common, namely a desire to maximise individual freedom and end state and capitalist domination and exploitation.

In addition to this major disagreement, anarchists also disagree over such issues as syndicalism, pacifism, "lifestylism," animal rights and a whole host of other ideas, but these, while important, are only different aspects of anarchism. Beyond a few key ideas, the anarchist movement (like life itself) is in a constant state of change, discussion and thought – as would be expected in a movement that values freedom so highly.

The most obvious thing to note about the different types of anarchism is that *"[n]one are named after some Great Thinker; instead, they are invariably named either after some kind of practice, or, most often, organisational principle . . . Anarchists like to*

both in consumption **and** in production, as social anarchists are firm supporters of workers' self-management.

Thus, for social anarchists, the Individualist Anarchist opposition to communism is only valid for state or authoritarian communism and ignores the fundamental nature of communist-anarchism. Communist anarchists do not replace individuality with community but rather use community to defend individuality. Rather than have "society" control the individual, as the Individualist Anarchist fears, social anarchism is based on importance of individuality and individual expression:

> *"Anarchist Communism maintains that most valuable of all conquests – individual liberty – and moreover extends it and gives it a solid basis – economic liberty – without which political liberty is delusive; it does not ask the individual who has rejected god, the universal tyrant, god the king, and god the parliament, to give unto himself a god more terrible than any of the proceeding – god the Community, or to abdicate upon its altar his [or her] independence, his [or her] will, his [or her] tastes, and to renew the vow of asceticism which he formally made before the crucified god. It says to him, on the contrary, 'No society is free so long as the individual is not so! . . .'"* [**Op. Cit.**, pp. 14-15]

In addition, social anarchists have always recognised the need for voluntary collectivisation. If people desire to work by themselves, this is not seen as a problem (see Kropotkin's **The Conquest of Bread**, p. 61 and **Act for Yourselves**, pp. 104-5 as well as Malatesta's **Errico Malatesta: His Life and Ideas**, p. 99 and p. 103). This, social anarchists, stress does not in any way contradict their principles or the communist nature of their desired society as such exceptions are rooted

Needless to say, social anarchists disagree. They argue that Stirner's and Proudhon's comments are totally correct – but only about authoritarian communism. As Kropotkin argued, *"before and in 1848, the theory [of communism] was put forward in such a shape as to fully account for Proudhon's distrust as to its effect upon liberty. The old idea of Communism was the idea of monastic communities under the severe rule of elders or of men of science for directing priests. The last vestiges of liberty and of individual energy would be destroyed, if humanity ever had to go through such a communism."* [**Act for Yourselves**, p. 98] Kropotkin always argued that communist-anarchism was a **new** development and given that it dates from the 1870s, Proudhon's and Stirner's remarks cannot be considered as being directed against it as they could not be familiar with it.

Rather than subject the individual to the community, social anarchists argue that communal ownership would provide the necessary framework to protect individual liberty in all aspects of life by abolishing the power of the property owner, in whatever form it takes. In addition, rather than abolish **all** individual "property," communist anarchism acknowledges the importance of individual possessions and individual space. Thus we find Kropotkin arguing against forms of communism that *"desire to manage the community after the model of a family . . . [to live] all in the same house and . . . thus forced to continuously meet the same 'brethren and sisters' . . . [it is] a fundamental error to impose on all the 'great family' instead of trying, on the contrary, to guarantee as much freedom and home life to each individual."* [**Small Communal Experiments and Why They Fail**, pp. 8-9] The aim of anarchist-communism is, to again quote Kropotkin, to place *"the product reaped or manufactured at the disposal of all, leaving to each the liberty to consume them as he pleases in his own home."* [**The Place of Anarchism in the Evolution of Socialist Thought**, p. 7] This ensures individual expression of tastes and desires and so individuality –

distinguish themselves by what they do, and how they organise themselves to go about doing it." [David Graeber, **Fragments of An Anarchist Anthropology**, p. 5] This does not mean that anarchism does not have individuals who have contributed significantly to anarchist theory. Far from it, as can be seen in section A.4 there are many such people. Anarchists simply recognise that to call your theory after an individual is a kind of idolatry. Anarchists know that even the greatest thinker is only human and, consequently, can make mistakes, fail to live up to their ideals or have a partial understanding of certain issues (see section H.2 for more discussion on this). Moreover, we see that the world changes and, obviously, what was a suitable practice or programme in, say, industrialising France of the 1840s may have its limitations in 21st century France!

Consequently, it is to be expected that a social theory like anarchism would have numerous schools of thought and practice associated with it. Anarchism, as we noted in section A.5, has its roots in the struggles of working class people against oppression. Anarchist ideas have developed in many different social situations and, consequently, have reflected those circumstances. Most obviously, individualist anarchism initially developed in pre-industrial America and as a result has a different perspective on many issues than social anarchism. As America changed, going from a predominantly pre-capitalist rural society to an industrialised capitalist one, American anarchism changed:

> *"Originally the American movement, the native creation which arose with Josiah Warren in 1829, was purely individualistic; the student of economy will easily understand the material and historical causes for such development. But within the last twenty years the communist idea has made great progress, owning primarily to that concentration in capitalist production which has driven the Amer-*

ican workingman [and woman] to grasp at the idea of solidarity, and, secondly, to the expulsion of active communist propagandists from Europe." [Voltairine de Cleyre, **The Voltairine de Cleyre Reader**, p. 110]

Thus rather than the numerous types of anarchism being an expression of some sort of "incoherence" within anarchism, it simply shows a movement which has its roots in real life rather than the books of long dead thinkers. It also shows a healthy recognition that people are different and that one person's dream may be another's nightmare and that different tactics and organisations may be required at different social periods and struggles. So while anarchists have their preferences on how they think a free society will, in general, be like and be created they are aware that other forms of anarchism and libertarian tactics may be more suitable for other people and social circumstances. However, just because someone calls themselves or their theory anarchism does not make it so. Any genuine type of anarchism must share the fundamental perspectives of the movement, in other words be anti-state and anti-capitalist.

Moreover, claims of anarchist "incoherence" by its critics are usually overblown. After all, being followers of Marx and/or Lenin has not stopped Marxists from splitting into numerous parties, groups and sects. Nor has it stopped sectarian conflict between them based on whose interpretation of the holy writings are the "correct" ones or who has used the "correct" quotes to bolster attempts to adjust their ideas and practice to a world significantly different from Europe in the 1850s or Russia in the 1900s. At least anarchists are honest about their differences!

Lastly, to put our cards on the table, the writers of this FAQ place themselves firmly in the "social" strand of anarchism. This does not mean that we ignore the many important ideas associated with individualist anarchism, only that we think

workplace needs a group to operate it then it must be owned by the group who use it. If one individual claims to own it and it is, in fact, used by more than that person then, obviously, "occupancy and use" is violated. Equally, if an owner employs others to use the workplace then the boss can appropriate the product of the workers' labour, so violating the maxim that labour should receive its full product. Thus the principles of individualist anarchism point to anti-capitalist conclusions (see section G.3).

This second difference is the most important. The individualist fears being forced to join a community and thus losing his or her freedom (including the freedom to exchange freely with others). Max Stirner puts this position well when he argues that *"Communism, by the abolition of all personal property, only presses me back still more into dependence on another, to wit, on the generality or collectivity . . . [which is] a condition hindering my free movement, a sovereign power over me. Communism rightly revolts against the pressure that I experience from individual proprietors; but still more horrible is the might that it puts in the hands of the collectivity."* [**The Ego and Its Own**, p. 257] Proudhon also argued against communism, stating that the community becomes the proprietor under communism and so capitalism and communism are based on property and so authority (see the section *"Characteristics of communism and of property"* in **What is Property?**). Thus the Individualist anarchist argues that social ownership places the individual's freedom in danger as any form of communism subjects the individual to society or the commune. They fear that as well as dictating individual morality, socialisation would effectively eliminate workers' control as "society" would tell workers what to produce and take the product of their labour. In effect, they argue that communism (or social ownership in general) would be similar to capitalism, with the exploitation and authority of the boss replaced with that of "society."

look forward to the end of money and, therefore, of buying and selling. All agree, however, that anarchy will see *"Capitalistic and proprietary exploitation stopped everywhere"* and *"the wage system abolished"* whether by *"equal and just exchange"* (like Proudhon) or by the free sharing (like Kropotkin). [Proudhon, **The General Idea of the Revolution**, p. 281]

In contrast, the individualist anarchist (like the mutualist) denies that this system of use-rights should include the product of the workers labour. Instead of social ownership, individualist anarchists propose a more market based system in which workers would possess their own means of production and exchange the product of their labour freely with other workers. They argue that capitalism is not, in fact, a truly free market. Rather, by means of the state, capitalists have placed fetters on the market to create and protect their economic and social power (market discipline for the working class, state aid for the ruling class in other words). These state created monopolies (of money, land, tariffs and patents) and state enforcement of capitalist property rights are the source of economic inequality and exploitation. With the abolition of government, **real** free competition would result and ensure the end of capitalism and capitalist exploitation (see Benjamin Tucker's essay **State Socialism and Anarchism** for an excellent summary of this argument).

The Individualist anarchists argue that the means of production (bar land) are the product of individual labour and so they accept that people should be able to sell the means of production they use, if they so desire. However, they reject capitalist property rights and instead favour an *"occupancy and use"* system. If the means of production, say land, is not in use, it reverts back to common ownership and is available to others for use. They think this system, called mutualism, will result in workers control of production and the end of capitalist exploitation and usury. This is because, logically and practically, a regime of "occupancy and use" cannot be squared with wage labour. If a

social anarchism is more appropriate for modern society, that it creates a stronger base for individual freedom, and that it more closely reflects the sort of society we would like to live in.

A.3.1 What are the differences between individualist and social anarchists?

While there is a tendency for individuals in both camps to claim that the proposals of the other camp would lead to the creation of some kind of state, the differences between individualists and social anarchists are not very great. Both are anti-state, anti-authority and anti-capitalist. The major differences are twofold.

The first is in regard to the means of action in the here and now (and so the manner in which anarchy will come about). Individualists generally prefer education and the creation of alternative institutions, such as mutual banks, unions, communes, etc. They usually support strikes and other non-violent forms of social protest (such as rent strikes, the non-payment of taxes and so on). Such activity, they argue, will ensure that present society will gradually develop out of government into an anarchist one. They are primarily evolutionists, not revolutionists, and dislike social anarchists' use of direct action to create revolutionary situations. They consider revolution as being in contradiction to anarchist principles as it involves the expropriation of capitalist property and, therefore, authoritarian means. Rather they seek to return to society the wealth taken out of society by property by means of an new, alternative, system of economics (based around mutual banks and co-operatives). In this way a general "social liquidation" would be rendered easy, with anarchism coming about by reform and not by expropriation.

Most social anarchists recognise the need for education and to create alternatives (such as libertarian unions), but most disagree that this is enough in itself. They do not think capitalism can be reformed piece by piece into anarchy, although they do not ignore the importance of reforms by social struggle that increase libertarian tendencies within capitalism. Nor do they think revolution is in contradiction with anarchist principles as it is not authoritarian to destroy authority (be it state or capitalist). Thus the expropriation of the capitalist class and the destruction of the state by social revolution is a libertarian, not authoritarian, act by its very nature as it is directed against those who govern and exploit the vast majority. In short, social anarchists are usually evolutionists **and** revolutionists, trying to strengthen libertarian tendencies within capitalism while trying to abolish that system by social revolution. However, as some social anarchists are purely evolutionists too, this difference is not the most important one dividing social anarchists from individualists.

The second major difference concerns the form of anarchist economy proposed. Individualists prefer a market-based system of distribution to the social anarchists need-based system. Both agree that the current system of capitalist property rights must be abolished and that use rights must replace property rights in the means of life (i.e. the abolition of rent, interest and profits – *"usury,"* to use the individualist anarchists' preferred term for this unholy trinity). In effect, both schools follow Proudhon's classic work **What is Property?** and argue that possession must replace property in a free society (see section B.3 for a discussion of anarchist viewpoints on property). Thus property *"will lose a certain attribute which sanctifies it now. The absolute ownership of it – 'the right to use or abuse' – will be abolished, and possession, use, will be the only title. It will be seen how impossible it would be for one person to 'own' a million acres of land, without a title deed, backed by a government ready to protect the title at all hazards."* [Lucy Parsons, **Freedom, Equality & Solidarity**, p. 33

However, within this use-rights framework, the two schools of anarchism propose different systems. The social anarchist generally argues for communal (or social) ownership and use. This would involve social ownership of the means of production and distribution, with personal possessions remaining for things you use, but not what was used to create them. Thus *"your watch is your own, but the watch factory belongs to the people." "Actual use,"* continues Berkman, *"will be considered the only title – not to ownership but to possession. The organisation of the coal miners, for example, will be in charge of the coal mines, not as owners but as the operating agency . . . Collective possession, co-operatively managed in the interests of the community, will take the place of personal ownership privately conducted for profit."* [**What is Anarchism?**, p. 217]

This system would be based on workers' self-management of their work and (for most social anarchists) the free sharing of the product of that labour (i.e. an economic system without money). This is because *"in the present state of industry, when everything is interdependent, when each branch of production is knit up with all the rest, the attempt to claim an individualist origin for the products of industry is untenable."* Given this, it is impossible to *"estimate the share of each in the riches which **all** contribute to amass"* and, moreover, the *"common possession of the instruments of labour must necessarily bring with it the enjoyment in common of the fruits of common labour."* [Kropotkin, **The Conquest of Bread**, p. 45 and p. 46] By this social anarchists simply mean that the social product which is produced by all would be available to all and each individual who has contributed productively to society can take what they need (how quickly we can reach such an ideal is a moot point, as we discuss in section I.2.2). Some social anarchists, like mutualists for example, are against such a system of libertarian (or free) communism, but, in general, the vast majority of social anarchists

the skills necessary to survive it nor could the Earth provide enough food for six billion people trying to live in a primitivist manner. Other primitivists have asserted that it can, stating *"[i]t is not possible for all six billion of the planet's current inhabitants to survive as hunter-gatherers, but it is possible for those who can't to grow their own food in significantly smaller spaces . . . as has been demonstrated by permaculture, organic gardening, and indigenous horticulture techniques."* [**Against Mass Society**] Unfortunately no evidence was provided to show the truth of this assertion nor that people could develop the necessary skills in time even if it were. It seems a slim hope to place the fate of billions on, so that humanity can be "wild" and free from such tyrannies as hospitals, books and electricity.

Faced with the horrors that such a *"collapse"* would entail, those primitivists who have thought the issue through end up accepting the need for a transition period. John Zerzan, for example, argues that it *"seems evident that industrialisation and the factories could not be gotten rid of instantly, but equally clear that their liquidation must be pursued with all the vigour behind the rush of break-out."* Even the existence of cities is accepted, for *"[c]ultivation within the cities is another aspect of practical transition."* [**On the Transition: Postscript to Future Primitive**]

However, to accept the necessity of a transition period does little more than expose the contradictions within primitivism. Zerzan notes that *"the means of reproducing the prevailing Death Ship (e.g. its technology) cannot be used to fashion a liberated world."* He ponders: *"What would we keep? 'Labour-saving devices?' Unless they involve no division of labour (e.g. a lever or incline), this concept is a fiction; behind the 'saving' is hidden the congealed drudgery of many and the despoliation of the natural world."* How this is compatible with maintaining *"industrialisation and the factories"* for a (non-specified) period is unclear. Similarly, he argues that *"[i]nstead of the coercion of work – and*

of ecological problems. This is one of the key areas in which they disagree with "Primitivist" Anarchist ideas, who tend to be far more critical of **all** aspects of modern life, with some going so far as calling for *"the end of civilisation"* including, apparently, all forms of technology and large scale organisation. We discuss these ideas in section A.3.9.

We must note here that other anarchists, while generally agreeing with its analysis and suggestions, are deeply critical of Social Ecology's support for running candidates in municipal elections. While Social Ecologists see this as a means of creating popular self-managing assemblies and creating a counter power to the state, few anarchists agree. Rather they see it as inherently reformist as well as being hopelessly naive about the possibilities of using elections to bring about social change (see section J.5.14 for a fuller discussion of this). Instead they propose direct action as the means to forward anarchist and ecological ideas, rejecting electioneering as a dead-end which ends up watering down radical ideas and corrupting the people involved (see section J.2 – What is Direct Action?).

Lastly, there is "deep ecology," which, because of its biocentric nature, many anarchists reject as anti-human. There are few anarchists who think that **people,** as people, are the cause of the ecological crisis, which many deep ecologists seem to suggest. Murray Bookchin, for example, has been particularly outspoken in his criticism of deep ecology and the anti-human ideas that are often associated with it (see **Which Way for the Ecology Movement?**, for example). David Watson has also argued against Deep Ecology (see his **How Deep is Deep Ecology?** written under the name George Bradford). Most anarchists would argue that it is not people but the current system which is the problem, and that only people can change it. In the words of Murray Bookchin:

> *"[Deep Ecology's problems] stem from an authoritarian streak in a crude biologism that uses 'natural*

> *law' to conceal an ever-diminishing sense of humanity and papers over a profound ignorance of social reality by ignoring the fact it is* ***capitalism*** *we are talking about, not an abstraction called 'Humanity' and 'Society.'"* [**The Philosophy of Social Ecology**, p. 160]

Thus, as Morris stresses, *"by focusing entirely on the category of 'humanity' the Deep Ecologists ignore or completely obscure the social origins of ecological problems, or alternatively, biologise what are essentially social problems."* To submerge ecological critique and analysis into a simplistic protest against the human race ignores the real causes and dynamics of ecological destruction and, therefore, ensures an end to this destruction cannot be found. Simply put, it is hardly "people" who are to blame when the vast majority have no real say in the decisions that affect their lives, communities, industries and eco-systems. Rather, it is an economic and social system that places profits and power above people and planet. By focusing on "Humanity" (and so failing to distinguish between rich and poor, men and women, whites and people of colour, exploiters and exploited, oppressors and oppressed) the system we live under is effectively ignored, and so are the institutional causes of ecological problems. This can be *"both reactionary and authoritarian in its implications, and substitutes a naive understanding of 'nature' for a critical study of real social issues and concerns."* [Morris, **Op. Cit.**, p. 135]

Faced with a constant anarchist critique of certain of their spokes-persons ideas, many Deep Ecologists have turned away from the anti-human ideas associated with their movement. Deep ecology, particularly the organisation ***Earth First!*** (EF!), has changed considerably over time, and EF! now has a close working relationship with the ***Industrial Workers of the World*** (IWW), a syndicalist union. While deep ecology is not a thread of eco-anarchism, it shares many ideas and is

he talks about the need for *"positive alternatives"* to be built now as *"the social disruption caused by collapse could easily create the psychological insecurity and social vacuum in which fascism and other totalitarian dictatorships could flourish."* [**Op. Cit.**] Social change based on *"collapse," "insecurity"* and *"social disruption"* does not sound like a recipe for a successful revolution.

Then there are the anti-organisation dogmas expounded by primitivism. Moore is typical, asserting that *"[o]rganisations, for anarcho-primitivists, are just rackets, gangs for putting a particular ideology in power"* and reiterates the point by saying primitivists stand for *"the abolition of all power relations, including the State . . . and any kind of party or organisation."* [**Op. Cit.**] Yet without organisation, no modern society could function. There would be a total and instant collapse which would see not only mass starvation but also ecological destruction as nuclear power stations meltdown, industrial waste seeps into the surrounding environment, cities and towns decay and hordes of starving people fighting over what vegetables, fruits and animals they could find in the countryside. Clearly an anti-organisation dogma can only be reconciled with the idea of a near overnight *"collapse"* of civilisation, not with a steady progress towards a long term goal. Equally, how many *"positive alternatives"* could exist without organisation?

Moore dismissed any critique that points out that a collapse would cause mass destruction as *"just smear tactics," "weird fantasies spread by some commentators hostile to anarcho-primitivism who suggest that the population levels envisaged by anarcho-primitivists would have to be achieved by mass die-offs or nazi-style death camps."* The *"commitment of anarcho-primitivists to the abolition of all power relations . . . means that such orchestrated slaughter remains an impossibility as well as just plain horrendous."* [**Op. Cit.**] Yet no critic is suggesting that primitivists desire such a die-off or seek to organise it. They simply point out that the collapse of civilisation would result in a mass die-off due to the fact that most people do not have

not be abruptly discontinued without causing a global chaos that would wipe out billions of people." [**Op. Cit.**, p. 79]

The reason for this is simply that we live in a highly industrialised and interconnected system in which most people do not have the skills required to live in a hunter-gatherer or even agricultural society. Moreover, it is extremely doubtful that six billion people **could** survive as hunter-gatherers even if they had the necessary skills. As Brian Morris notes, *"[t]he future we are told is 'primitive.' How this is to be achieved in a world that presently sustains almost six billion people (for evidence suggests that the hunter-gatherer lifestyle is only able to support 1 or 2 people per sq. mile)"* primitivists like Zerzan do not tell us. [*"Anthropology and Anarchism,"* pp. 35-41, **Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed**, no. 45, p. 38] Most anarchists, therefore, agree with Chomsky's summation that *"I do not think that they are realising that what they are calling for is the mass genocide of millions of people because of the way society is now structured and organised . . . If you eliminate these structures everybody dies . . . And, unless one thinks through these things, it's not really serious."* [**Chomsky on Anarchism**, p. 226]

Somewhat ironically, many proponents of primitivsm agree with its critics that the earth would be unable to support six billion living as a hunter-gatherers. This, critics argue, gives primitivism a key problem in that population levels will take time to fall and so any "primitivist" rebellion faces two options. Either it comes about via some kind of collapse of "civilisation" or it involves a lengthy transition period during which "civilisation" and its industrial legacies are decommissioned safely, population levels drop naturally to an appropriate level and people gain the necessary skills required for their new existence.

The problems with the first option should be obvious but, sadly, it is implied by many primitivist writers. Moore, for example, talks about *"when civilisation collapses"* (*"through its own volition, through our efforts, or a combination of the two"*). This implies an extremely speedy process which is confirmed when

becoming more accepted by anarchists as EF! rejects its few misanthropic ideas and starts to see that hierarchy, not the human race, is the problem (for a discussion between Murray Bookchin and leading Earth Firster! Dave Foreman see the book **Defending the Earth**).

A.3.4 Is anarchism pacifistic?

A pacifist strand has long existed in anarchism, with Leo Tolstoy being one of its major figures. This strand is usually called ***"anarcho-pacifism"*** (the term ***"non-violent anarchist"*** is sometimes used, but this term is unfortunate because it implies the rest of the movement are "violent," which is not the case!). The union of anarchism and pacifism is not surprising given the fundamental ideals and arguments of anarchism. After all, violence, or the threat of violence or harm, is a key means by which individual freedom is destroyed. As Peter Marshall points out, *"[g]iven the anarchist's respect for the sovereignty of the individual, in the long run it is non-violence and not violence which is implied by anarchist values."* [**Demanding the Impossible**, p.637] Malatesta is even more explicit when he wrote that the *"main plank of anarchism is the removal of violence from human relations"* and that anarchists *"are opposed to violence."* [**Errico Malatesta: His Life and Ideas**, p. 53]

However, although many anarchists reject violence and proclaim pacifism, the movement, in general, is not essentially pacifistic (in the sense of opposed all forms of violence at all times). Rather, it is anti-militarist, being against the organised violence of the state but recognising that there are important differences between the violence of the oppressor and the violence of the oppressed. This explains why the anarchist movement has always placed a lot of time and energy in opposing the military machine and capitalist wars while, at the same time, supporting and organising armed resistance against op-

pression (as in the case of the Makhnovist army during the Russian Revolution which resisted both Red and White armies and the militias the anarchists organised to resist the fascists during the Spanish Revolution – see sections A.5.4 and A.5.6, respectively).

On the question of non-violence, as a rough rule of thumb, the movement divides along Individualist and Social lines. Most Individualist anarchists support purely non-violent tactics of social change, as do the Mutualists. However, Individualist anarchism is not pacifist as such, as many support the idea of violence in self-defence against aggression. Most social anarchists, on the other hand, do support the use of revolutionary violence, holding that physical force will be required to overthrow entrenched power and to resist state and capitalist aggression (although it was an anarcho-syndicalist, Bart de Ligt, who wrote the pacifist classic, **The Conquest of Violence**). As Malatesta put it, violence, while being *"in itself an evil,"* is *"justifiable only when it is necessary to defend oneself and others from violence"* and that a *"slave is always in a state of legitimate defence and consequently, his violence against the boss, against the oppressor, is always morally justifiable."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 55 and pp. 53-54] Moreover, they stress that, to use the words of Bakunin, since social oppression *"stems far less from individuals than from the organisation of things and from social positions"* anarchists aim to *"ruthlessly destroy positions and things"* rather than people, since the aim of an anarchist revolution is to see the end of privileged classes *"not as individuals, but as classes."* [quoted by Richard B. Saltman, **The Social and Political Thought of Michael Bakunin** p. 121, p. 124 and p. 122]

Indeed, the question of violence is relatively unimportant to most anarchists, as they do not glorify it and think that it should be kept to a minimum during any social struggle or revolution. All anarchists would agree with the Dutch pacifist anarcho-syndicalist Bart de Ligt when he argued that *"the vio-*

tion are minimal . . . overall life patterns wouldn't change too much." Thus *"[f]rom the perspective of anarcho-primitivism, all other forms of radicalism appear as reformist, whether or not they regard themselves as revolutionary."* [**Op. Cit.**]

In reply, "classical anarchists" point out three things. Firstly, to claim that the *"worst abuses and oppressions"* account for 1% of capitalist society is simply nonsense and, moreover, something an apologist of that system would happily agree with. Secondly, it is obvious from reading any "classical" anarchist text that Moore's assertions are nonsense. "Classical" anarchism aims to transform society radically from top to bottom, not tinker with minor aspects of it. Do primitivists really think that people who went to the effort to abolish capitalism would simply continue doing 99% of the same things they did before hand? Of course not. In other words, it is not enough to get rid of the boss, although this is a necessary first step! Thirdly, and most importantly, Moore's argument ensures that his new society would be impossible to reach.

So, as can be seen, primitivism has little or no bearing to the traditional anarchist movement and its ideas. The visions of both are simply incompatible, with the ideas of the latter dismissed as authoritarian by the former and anarchists questioning whether primitivism is practical in the short term or even desirable in the long. While supporters of primitivism like to portray it as the most advanced and radical form of anarchism, others are less convinced. They consider it as a confused ideology which draws its followers into absurd positions and, moreover, is utterly impractical. They would agree with Ken Knabb that primitivism is rooted in *"fantasies [which] contain so many obvious self-contradictions that it is hardly necessary to criticise them in any detail. They have questionable relevance to actual past societies and virtually no relevance to present possibilities. Even supposing that life was better in one or another previous era,* ***we have to begin from where we are now.*** *Modern technology is so interwoven with all aspects of our life that it could*

as it is *"civilisation's current dominant manifestation."* However, they stress that it is *"Civilisation, not capitalism per se, was the genesis of systemic authoritarianism, compulsory servitude and social isolation. Hence, an attack upon capitalism that fails to target civilisation can never abolish the institutionalised coercion that fuels society. To attempt to collectivise industry for the purpose of democratising it is to fail to recognise that all large-scale organisations adopt a direction and form that is independent of its members' intentions."* Thus, they argue, genuine anarchists must oppose industry and technology for *"[h]ierarchical institutions, territorial expansion, and the mechanisation of life are all required for the administration and process of mass production to occur."* For primitivists, *"[o]nly small communities of self-sufficient individuals can coexist with other beings, human or not, without imposing their authority upon them."* Such communities would share essential features with tribal societies, *"[f]or over 99% of human history, humans lived within small and egalitarian extended family arrangements, while drawing their subsistence directly from the land."* [**Against Mass Society**]

While such tribal communities, which lived in harmony with nature and had little or no hierarchies, are seen as inspirational, primitivists look (to use the title of a John Zerzan book) forward to seeing the *"Future Primitive."* As John Moore puts it, *"the future envisioned by anarcho-primitivism . . . is without precedent. Although primitive cultures provide intimations of the future, and that future may well incorporate elements derived from those cultures, an anarcho-primitivist world would likely be quite different from previous forms of anarchy."* [**Op. Cit.**]

For the primitivist, other forms of anarchism are simply self-managed alienation within essentially the same basic system we now endure. Hence Moore's comment that *"classical anarchism"* wants *"to take over civilisation, rework its structures to some degree, and remove its worst abuses and oppressions. However, 99% of life in civilisation remains unchanged in their future scenarios, precisely because the aspects of civilisation they ques-*

lence and warfare which are characteristic conditions of the capitalist world do not go with the liberation of the individual, which is the historic mission of the exploited classes. The greater the violence, the weaker the revolution, even where violence has deliberately been put at the service of the revolution." [**The Conquest of Violence**, p. 75]

Similarly, all anarchists would agree with de Ligt on, to use the name of one of his book's chapters, *"the absurdity of bourgeois pacifism."* For de Ligt, and all anarchists, violence is inherent in the capitalist system and any attempt to make capitalism pacifistic is doomed to failure. This is because, on the one hand, war is often just economic competition carried out by other means. Nations often go to war when they face an economic crisis, what they cannot gain in economic struggle they attempt to get by conflict. On the other hand, *"violence is indispensable in modern society. . . [because] without it the ruling class would be completely unable to maintain its privileged position with regard to the exploited masses in each country. The army is used first and foremost to hold down the workers. . . when they become discontented."* [Bart de Ligt, **Op. Cit.**, p. 62] As long as the state and capitalism exist, violence is inevitable and so, for anarcho-pacifists, the consistent pacifist must be an anarchist just as the consistent anarchist must be a pacifist.

For those anarchists who are non-pacifists, violence is seen as an unavoidable and unfortunate result of oppression and exploitation as well as the only means by which the privileged classes will renounce their power and wealth. Those in authority rarely give up their power and so must be forced. Hence the need for *"transitional"* violence *"to put an end to the far greater, and permanent, violence which keeps the majority of mankind in servitude."* [Malatesta, **Op. Cit.**, p. 55] To concentrate on the issue of violence versus non-violence is to ignore the real issue, namely how do we change society for the better. As Alexander Berkman pointed out, those anarchists who are pacifists confuse the issue, like those who think *"it's the same as if rolling*

up your sleeves for work should be considered the work itself." To the contrary, *"[t]he fighting part of revolution is merely rolling up your sleeves. The real, actual task is ahead."* [**What is Anarchism?**, p. 183] And, indeed, most social struggle and revolutions start relatively peaceful (via strikes, occupations and so on) and only degenerate into violence when those in power try to maintain their position (a classic example of this is in Italy, in 1920, when the occupation of factories by their workers was followed by fascist terror – see section A.5.5).

As noted above, all anarchists are anti-militarists and oppose both the military machine (and so the "defence" industry) as well as statist/capitalist wars (although a few anarchists, like Rudolf Rocker and Sam Dolgoff, supported the anti-fascist capitalist side during the second world war as the lesser evil). The anti-war machine message of anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists was propagated long before the start of the first world war, with syndicalists and anarchists in Britain and North America reprinting a French CGT leaflet urging soldiers not to follow orders and repress their striking fellow workers. Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman were both arrested and deported from America for organising a ***"No-Conscription League"*** in 1917 while many anarchists in Europe were jailed for refusing to join the armed forces in the first and second world wars. The anarcho-syndicalist influenced IWW was crushed by a ruthless wave of government repression due to the threat its organising and anti-war message presented to the powerful elites who favoured war. More recently, anarchists, (including people like Noam Chomsky and Paul Goodman) have been active in the peace movement as well as contributing to the resistance to conscription where it still exists. Anarchists took an active part in opposing such wars as the Vietnam War, the Falklands war as well as the Gulf wars of 1991 and 2003 (including, in Italy and Spain, helping to organise strikes in protest against it). And it was during the 1991 Gulf War when many anarchists raised the slogan ***"No***

and redesigning them for human rather than capitalistic ends." [**Public Secrets**, p. 79 and p. 80] Thus most eco-anarchists see the use of appropriate technology as the means of creating a society which lives in balance with nature.

However, a small but vocal minority of self-proclaimed Green anarchists disagree. Writers such as John Zerzan, John Moore and David Watson have expounded a vision of anarchism which, they claim, aims to critique every form of power and oppression. This is often called *"anarcho-primitivism,"* which according to Moore, is simply *"a shorthand term for a radical current that critiques the totality of civilisation from an anarchist perspective, and seeks to initiate a comprehensive transformation of human life."* [**Primitivist Primer**]

How this current expresses itself is diverse, with the most extreme elements seeking the end of all forms of technology, division of labour, domestication, "Progress", industrialism, what they call *"mass society"* and, for some, even symbolic culture (i.e. numbers, language, time and art). They tend to call any system which includes these features *"civilisation"* and, consequently, aim for *"the destruction of civilisation"*. How far back they wish to go is a moot point. Some see the technological level that existed before the Industrial Revolution as acceptable, many go further and reject agriculture and all forms of technology beyond the most basic. For them, a return to the wild, to a hunter-gatherer mode of life, is the only way for anarchy is exist and dismiss out of hand the idea that appropriate technology can be used to create an anarchist society based on industrial production which minimises its impact on ecosystems.

Thus we find the primitivist magazine **"Green Anarchy"** arguing that those, like themselves, *"who prioritise the values of personal autonomy or wild existence have reason to oppose and reject all large-scale organisations and societies on the grounds that they necessitate imperialism, slavery and hierarchy, regardless of the purposes they may be designed for."* They oppose capitalism

tion would develop. Thus the struggle against the state was just one part of a wider struggle to end oppression and exploitation and could not be isolated from these wider aims. As "anarcho"-capitalists do not seek the abolition of capitalism along with the state they are not anarchists and so "anarchism without adjectives" does not apply to the so-called "anarchist" capitalists (see section F on why "anarcho"-capitalism is not anarchist).

This is not to say that after a revolution "anarcho"-capitalist communities would not exist. Far from it. If a group of people wanted to form such a system then they could, just as we would expect a community which supported state socialism or theocracy to live under that regime. Such enclaves of hierarchy would exist simply because it is unlikely that everyone on the planet, or even in a given geographical area, will become anarchists all at the same time. The key thing to remember is that no such system would be anarchist and, consequently, is not *"anarchism without adjectives."*

A.3.9 What is anarcho-primitivism?

As discussed in section A.3.3, most anarchists would agree with Situationist Ken Knabb in arguing that *"in a liberated world computers and other modern technologies could be used to eliminate dangerous or boring tasks, freeing everyone to concentrate on more interesting activities."* Obviously *"[c]ertain technologies – nuclear power is the most obvious example – are indeed so insanely dangerous that they will no doubt be brought to a prompt halt. Many other industries which produce absurd, obsolete or superfluous commodities will, of course, cease automatically with the disappearance of their commercial rationales. But many technologies . . ., however they may presently be misused, have few if any* ***inherent*** *drawbacks. It's simply a matter of using them more sensibly, bringing them under popular control, introducing a few ecological improvements,*

war but the class war" which nicely sums up the anarchist opposition to war – namely an evil consequence of any class system, in which the oppressed classes of different countries kill each other for the power and profits of their rulers. Rather than take part in this organised slaughter, anarchists urge working people to fight for their own interests, not those of their masters:

> *"More than ever we must avoid compromise; deepen the chasm between capitalists and wage slaves, between rulers and ruled; preach expropriation of private property and the destruction of states such as the only means of guaranteeing fraternity between peoples and Justice and Liberty for all; and we must prepare to accomplish these things."* [Malatesta, **Op. Cit.**, p. 251]

We must note here that Malatesta's words were written in part against Peter Kropotkin who, for reasons best known to himself, rejected everything he had argued for decades and supported the allies in the First World War as a lesser evil against German authoritarianism and Imperialism. Of course, as Malatesta pointed out, *"all Governments and all capitalist classes"* do *"misdeeds . . . against the workers and rebels of their own countries."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 246] He, along with Berkman, Goldman and a host of other anarchists, put their name to International Anarchist Manifesto against the First World War. It expressed the opinion of the bulk of the anarchist movement (at the time and consequently) on war and how to stop it. It is worth quoting from:

> *"The truth is that the cause of wars . . . rests solely in the existence of the State, which is the form of privilege . . . Whatever the form it may assume, the State is nothing but organised oppression for the advantage of a privileged minority . . .*

"The misfortune of the peoples, who were deeply attached to peace, is that, in order to avoid war, they placed their confidence in the State with its intriguing diplomatists, in democracy, and in political parties . . . This confidence has been deliberately betrayed, and continues to be so, when governments, with the aid of the whole of the press, persuade their respective people that this war is a war of liberation.

"We are resolutely against all wars between peoples, and . . . have been, are, and ever will be most energetically opposed to war.

"The role of the Anarchists . . . is to continue to proclaim that there is only one war of liberation: that which in all countries is waged by the oppressed against the oppressors, by the exploited against the exploiters. Our part is to summon the slaves to revolt against their masters.

"Anarchist action and propaganda should assiduously and perseveringly aim at weakening and dissolving the various States, at cultivating the spirit of revolt, and arousing discontent in peoples and armies. . .

"We must take advantage of all the movements of revolt, of all the discontent, in order to foment insurrection, and to organise the revolution which we look to put end to all social wrongs. . . Social justice realised through the free organisation of producers: war and militarism done away with forever; and complete freedom won, by the abolition of the State and its organs of destruction." [*"International Anarchist Manifesto on the War,"* **Anarchy! An Anthology of Emma Goldman's Mother Earth**, pp. 386-8]

I no longer label myself otherwise than 'Anarchist' simply." [*"The Making of An Anarchist"*, **The Voltairine de Cleyre Reader**, pp. 107-8]

These debates had a lasting impact on the anarchist movement, with such noted anarchists as de Cleyre, Malatesta, Nettlau and Reclus adopting the tolerant perspective embodied in the expression "anarchism without adjectives" (see Nettlau's **A Short History of Anarchism**, pages 195 to 201 for an excellent summary of this). It is also, we add, the dominant position within the anarchist movement today with most anarchists recognising the right of other tendencies to the name "anarchist" while, obviously, having their own preferences for specific types of anarchist theory and their own arguments why other types are flawed. However, we must stress that the different forms of anarchism (communism, syndicalism, religious etc) are not mutually exclusive and you do not have to support one and hate the others. This tolerance is reflected in the expression "anarchism without adjectives."

One last point, some "anarcho"-capitalists have attempted to use the tolerance associated with "anarchism without adjectives" to argue that their ideology should be accepted as part of the anarchist movement. After all, they argue, anarchism is just about getting rid of the state, economics is of secondary importance. However, such a use of *"anarchism without adjectives"* is bogus as it was commonly agreed at the time that the types of economics that were being discussed were **anti-capitalist** (i.e. socialistic). For Malatesta, for example, there were *"anarchists who foresee and propose other solution, other future forms of social organisation"* than communist anarchism, but they *"desire, just as we do, to destroy political power and private property." "Let us do away,"* he argued, *"with all exclusivism of schools of thinking"* and let us *"come to an understanding on ways and means, and go forwards."* [quoted by Nettlau, **Op. Cit.**, p. 175] In other words, it was agreed that capitalism had to be abolished along with the state and once this was the case free experimenta-

Thus, Malatesta continued, *"[e]ven the question as between anarchist-collectivism and anarchist-communism is a matter of qualification, of method and agreement"* as the key is that, no matter the system, *"a new moral conscience will come into being, which will make the wage system repugnant to men [and women] just as legal slavery and compulsion are now repugnant to them."* If this happens then, *"whatever the specific forms of society may turn out to be, the basis of social organisation will be communist."* As long as we *"hold to fundamental principles and . . . do our utmost to instil them in the masses"* we need not *"quarrel over mere words or trifles but give post-revolutionary society a direction towards justice, equality and liberty."* [quoted by Nettlau, **Op. Cit.**, p. 173 and p. 174]

Similarly, in the United States there was also an intense debate at the same time between Individualist and Communist anarchists. There Benjamin Tucker was arguing that Communist-Anarchists were not anarchists while John Most was saying similar things about Tucker's ideas. Just as people like Mella and Tarrida put forward the idea of tolerance between anarchist groups, so anarchists like Voltairine de Cleyre *"came to label herself simply 'Anarchist,' and called like Malatesta for an 'Anarchism without Adjectives,' since in the absence of government many different experiments would probably be tried in various localities in order to determine the most appropriate form."* [Peter Marshall, **Demanding the Impossible**, p. 393] In her own words, a whole range of economic systems would be *"advantageously tried in different localities. I would see the instincts and habits of the people express themselves in a free choice in every community; and I am sure that distinct environments would call out distinct adaptations."* [*"Anarchism"*, **Exquisite Rebel**, p. 79] Consequently, individualist and communist anarchist *"forms of society, as well as many intermediations, would, in the absence of government, be tried in various localities, according to the instincts and material condition of the people . . . Liberty and experiment alone can determine the best forms of society. Therefore*

Thus, the attraction of pacifism to anarchists is clear. Violence **is** authoritarian and coercive, and so its use does contradict anarchist principles. That is why anarchists would agree with Malatesta when he argues that *"[w]e are on principle opposed to violence and for this reason wish that the social struggle should be conducted as humanely as possible."* [Malatesta, **Op. Cit.**, p. 57] Most, if not all, anarchists who are not strict pacifists agree with pacifist-anarchists when they argue that violence can often be counterproductive, alienating people and giving the state an excuse to repress both the anarchist movement and popular movements for social change. All anarchists support non-violent direct action and civil disobedience, which often provide better roads to radical change.

So, to sum up, anarchists who are pure pacifists are rare. Most accept the use of violence as a necessary evil and advocate minimising its use. All agree that a revolution which **institutionalises** violence will just recreate the state in a new form. They argue, however, that it is not authoritarian to destroy authority or to use violence to resist violence. Therefore, although most anarchists are not pacifists, most reject violence except in self-defence and even then kept to the minimum.

A.3.5 What is anarcha-feminism?

Although opposition to the state and all forms of authority had a strong voice among the early feminists of the 19th century, the more recent feminist movement which began in the 1960's was founded upon anarchist practice. This is where the term anarcha-feminism came from, referring to women anarchists who act within the larger feminist and anarchist movements to remind them of their principles.

The modern anarcha-feminists built upon the feminist ideas of previous anarchists, both male and female. Indeed, anarchism and feminism have always been closely linked. Many

outstanding feminists have also been anarchists, including the pioneering Mary Wollstonecraft (author of **A Vindication of the Rights of Woman**), the Communard Louise Michel, and the American anarchists (and tireless champions of women's freedom) Voltairine de Cleyre and Emma Goldman (for the former, see her essays *"Sex Slavery"*, *"Gates of Freedom"*, *"The Case of Woman vs. Orthodoxy"*, *"Those Who Marry Do Ill"*; for the latter see *"The Traffic in Women"*, *"Woman Suffrage"*, *"The Tragedy of Woman's Emancipation"*, *"Marriage and Love"* and *"Victims of Morality"*, for example). **Freedom**, the world's oldest anarchist newspaper, was founded by Charlotte Wilson in 1886. Anarchist women like Virgilia D'Andrea and Rose Pesota played important roles in both the libertarian and labour movements. The ***"Mujeres Libres"*** (*"Free Women"*) movement in Spain during the Spanish revolution is a classic example of women anarchists organising themselves to defend their basic freedoms and create a society based on women's freedom and equality (see **Free Women of Spain** by Martha Ackelsberg for more details on this important organisation). In addition, all the male major anarchist thinkers (bar Proudhon) were firm supporters of women's equality. For example, Bakunin opposed patriarchy and how the law *"subjects [women] to the absolute domination of the man."* He argued that *"[e]qual rights must belong to men and women"* so that women can *"become independent and be free to forge their own way of life."* He looked forward to the end of *"the authoritarian juridical family"* and *"the full sexual freedom of women."* [**Bakunin on Anarchism**, p. 396 and p. 397]

Thus anarchism has since the 1860s combined a radical critique of capitalism and the state with an equally powerful critique of patriarchy (rule by men). Anarchists, particularly female ones, recognised that modern society was dominated by men. As Ana Maria Mozzoni (an Italian anarchist immigrant in Buenos Aires) put it, women *"will find that the priest who damns you is a man; that the legislator who oppresses you is a*

implied by Communist Anarchism. At this time (the 1880s), the Communist Anarchists stressed local (pure) cells of anarchist militants, generally opposed trade unionism (although Kropotkin was not one of these as he saw the importance of militant workers organisations) as well as being somewhat anti-organisation as well. Unsurprisingly, such a change in strategy and tactics came in for a lot of discussion from the Spanish Collectivists who strongly supported working class organisation and struggle.

This conflict soon spread outside of Spain and the discussion found its way into the pages of **La Revolte** in Paris. This provoked many anarchists to agree with Malatesta's argument that *"[i]t is not right for us, to say the least, to fall into strife over mere hypotheses."* [quoted by Max Nettlau, **A Short History of Anarchism**, pp. 198-9] Over time, most anarchists agreed (to use Nettlau's words) that *"we cannot foresee the economic development of the future"* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 201] and so started to stress what they had in common (opposition to capitalism and the state) rather than the different visions of how a free society would operate. As time progressed, most Communist-Anarchists saw that ignoring the labour movement ensured that their ideas did not reach the working class while most Collectivist-Anarchists stressed their commitment to communist ideals and their arrival sooner, rather than later, after a revolution. Thus both groups of anarchists could work together as there was *"no reason for splitting up into small schools, in our eagerness to overemphasise certain features, subject to variation in time and place, of the society of the future, which is too remote from us to permit us to envision all its adjustments and possible combinations."* Moreover, in a free society *"the methods and the individual forms of association and agreements, or the organisation of labour and of social life, will not be uniform and we cannot, at this moment, make and forecasts or determinations concerning them."* [Malatesta, quoted by Nettlau, **Op. Cit.**, p. 173]

dividualist. For others, . . . [it] was simply understood as an attitude that tolerated the coexistence of different anarchist schools." [**Anarchist Ideology and the Working Class Movement in Spain, 1868-1898**, p. 135]

The originator of the expression was Cuban born Fernando Tarrida del Marmol who used it in November, 1889, in Barcelona. He directed his comments towards the communist and collectivist anarchists in Spain who at the time were having an intense debate over the merits of their two theories. "Anarchism without adjectives" was an attempt to show greater tolerance between anarchist tendencies and to be clear that anarchists should not impose a preconceived economic plan on anyone – even in theory. Thus the economic preferences of anarchists should be of *"secondary importance"* to abolishing capitalism and the state, with free experimentation the one rule of a free society.

Thus the theoretical perspective known as *"anarquismo sin adjetives"* ("anarchism without adjectives") was one of the by-products of a intense debate within the movement itself. The roots of the argument can be found in the development of Communist Anarchism after Bakunin's death in 1876. While not entirely dissimilar to Collectivist Anarchism (as can be seen from James Guillaume's famous work *"On Building the New Social Order"* within **Bakunin on Anarchism**, the collectivists did see their economic system evolving into free communism), Communist Anarchists developed, deepened and enriched Bakunin's work just as Bakunin had developed, deepened and enriched Proudhon's. Communist Anarchism was associated with such anarchists as Elisee Reclus, Carlo Cafiero, Errico Malatesta and (most famously) Peter Kropotkin.

Quickly Communist-Anarchist ideas replaced Collectivist Anarchism as the main anarchist tendency in Europe, except in Spain. Here the major issue was not the question of communism (although for Ricardo Mella this played a part) but a question of the modification of strategy and tactics

*man, that the husband who reduces you to an **object** is a man; that the libertine who harasses you is a man; that the capitalist who enriches himself with your ill-paid work and the speculator who calmly pockets the price of your body, are men."* Little has changed since then. Patriarchy still exists and, to quote the anarchist paper **La Questione Sociale**, it is still usually the case that women *"are slaves both in social and private life. If you are a proletarian, you have two tyrants: the man and the boss. If bourgeois, the only sovereignty left to you is that of frivolity and coquetry."* [quoted by Jose Moya, **Italians in Buenos Aires's Anarchist Movement**, pp. 197-8 and p. 200]

Anarchism, therefore, is based on an awareness that fighting patriarchy is as important as fighting against the state or capitalism. For *"[y]ou can have no free, or just, or equal society, nor anything approaching it, so long as womanhood is bought, sold, housed, clothed, fed, and **protected**, as a chattel."* [Voltairine de Cleyre, *"The Gates of Freedom"*, pp. 235-250, Eugenia C. Delamotte, **Gates of Freedom**, p. 242] To quote Louise Michel:

> *"The first thing that must change is the relationship between the sexes. Humanity has two parts, men and women, and we ought to be walking hand in hand; instead there is antagonism, and it will last as long as the 'stronger' half controls, or think its controls, the 'weaker' half."* [**The Red Virgin: Memoirs of Louise Michel**, p. 139]

Thus anarchism, like feminism, fights patriarchy and for women's equality. Both share much common history and a concern about individual freedom, equality and dignity for members of the female sex (although, as we will explain in more depth below, anarchists have always been very critical of mainstream/liberal feminism as not going far enough). Therefore, it is unsurprising that the new wave of feminism of the sixties expressed itself in an anarchistic manner and

drew much inspiration from anarchist figures such as Emma Goldman. Cathy Levine points out that, during this time, *"independent groups of women began functioning without the structure, leaders, and other factotums of the male left, creating, independently and simultaneously, organisations similar to those of anarchists of many decades and regions. No accident, either."* [*"The Tyranny of Tyranny,"* **Quiet Rumours: An Anarcha-Feminist Reader**, p. 66] It is no accident because, as feminist scholars have noted, women were among the first victims of hierarchical society, which is thought to have begun with the rise of patriarchy and ideologies of domination during the late Neolithic era. Marilyn French argues (in **Beyond Power**) that the first major social stratification of the human race occurred when men began dominating women, with women becoming in effect a "lower" and "inferior" social class.

The links between anarchism and modern feminism exist in both ideas and action. Leading feminist thinker Carole Pateman notes that her *"discussion [on contract theory and its authoritarian and patriarchal basis] owes something to"* libertarian ideas, that is the *"anarchist wing of the socialist movement."* [**The Sexual Contract**, p. 14] Moreover, she noted in the 1980s how the *"major locus of criticism of authoritarian, hierarchical, undemocratic forms of organisation for the last twenty years has been the women's movement . . . After Marx defeated Bakunin in the First International, the prevailing form of organisation in the labour movement, the nationalised industries and in the left sects has mimicked the hierarchy of the state . . . The women's movement has rescued and put into practice the long-submerged idea [of anarchists like Bakunin] that movements for, and experiments in, social change must 'prefigure' the future form of social organisation."* [**The Disorder of Women**, p. 201]

Peggy Kornegger has drawn attention to these strong connections between feminism and anarchism, both in theory and practice. *"The radical feminist perspective is almost pure*

to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again." (Luke 6:30, repeated in Matthew 5:42) Nor do they hold *"all things common"* as practised by the first Christian believers. (Acts 4:32) So if non-anarchist believers are to be considered as ignoring the teachings of the Bible by anarchist ones, the same can be said of them by those they attack.

Moreover idea that Christianity is basically anarchism is hard to reconcile with its history. The Bible has been used to defend injustice far more than it has been to combat it. In countries where Churches hold **de facto** political power, such as in Ireland, in parts of South America, in nineteenth and early twentieth century Spain and so forth, typically anarchists are strongly anti-religious because the Church has the power to suppress dissent and class struggle. Thus the actual role of the Church belies the claim that the Bible is an anarchist text.

In addition, most social anarchists consider Tolstoyian pacifism as dogmatic and extreme, seeing the need (sometimes) for violence to resist greater evils. However, most anarchists would agree with Tolstoyians on the need for individual transformation of values as a key aspect of creating an anarchist society and on the importance of non-violence as a general tactic (although, we must stress, that few anarchists totally reject the use of violence in self-defence, when no other option is available).

A.3.8 What is *"anarchism without adjectives"*?

In the words of historian George Richard Esenwein, *"anarchism without adjectives"* in its broadest sense *"referred to an unhyphenated form of anarchism, that is, a doctrine without any qualifying labels such as communist, collectivist, mutualist, or in-*

For example, no capitalist nation would implement the no working on the Sabbath law which the Bible expounds. Most Christian bosses have been happy to force their fellow believers to work on the seventh day in spite of the Biblical penalty of being stoned to death (*"Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day, a sabbath of rest to the Lord: whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death."* Exodus 35:2). Would a Christian anarchist advocate such a punishment for breaking God's law? Equally, a nation which allowed a woman to be stoned to death for not being a virgin on her wedding night would, rightly, be considered utterly evil. Yet this is the fate specified in the "good book" (Deuteronomy 22:13-21). Would premarital sex by women be considered a capital crime by a Christian anarchist? Or, for that matter, should *"a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother"* also suffer the fate of having *"all the men of his city . . . stone him with stones, that he die"*? (Deuteronomy 21:18-21) Or what of the Bible's treatment of women: *"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands."* (Colossians 3:18) They are also ordered to *"keep silence in the churches."* (I Corinthians 14:34-35). Male rule is explicitly stated: *"I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God."* (I Corinthians 11:3)

Clearly, a Christian anarchist would have to be as highly selective as non-anarchist believers when it comes to applying the teachings of the Bible. The rich rarely proclaim the need for poverty (at least for themselves) and seem happy to forgot (like the churches) the difficulty a rich man apparently has entering heaven, for example. They seem happy to ignore Jesus' admonition that *"If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me."* (Matthew 19:21). The followers of the Christian right do not apply this to their political leaders, or, for that matter, their spiritual ones. Few apply the maxim to *"Give*

anarchism," she writes. *"The basic theory postulates the nuclear family as the basis of all authoritarian systems. The lesson the child learns, from father to teacher to boss to god, is to* ***obey*** *the great anonymous voice of Authority. To graduate from childhood to adulthood is to become a full-fledged automaton, incapable of questioning or even of thinking clearly."* [*"Anarchism: The Feminist Connection,"* **Quiet Rumours: An Anarcha-Feminist Reader**, p. 26] Similarly, the Zero Collective argues that Anarcha-feminism *"consists in recognising the anarchism of feminism and consciously developing it."* [*"Anarchism/Feminism,"* pp. 3-7, **The Raven**, no. 21, p. 6]

Anarcha-feminists point out that authoritarian traits and values, for example, domination, exploitation, aggressiveness, competitiveness, desensitisation etc., are highly valued in hierarchical civilisations and are traditionally referred to as "masculine." In contrast, non-authoritarian traits and values such as co-operation, sharing, compassion, sensitivity, warmth, etc., are traditionally regarded as "feminine" and are devalued. Feminist scholars have traced this phenomenon back to the growth of patriarchal societies during the early Bronze Age and their conquest of co-operatively based "organic" societies in which "feminine" traits and values were prevalent and respected. Following these conquests, however, such values came to be regarded as "inferior," especially for a man, since men were in charge of domination and exploitation under patriarchy. (See e.g. Riane Eisler, **The Chalice and the Blade**; Elise Boulding, **The Underside of History**). Hence anarcha-feminists have referred to the creation of a non-authoritarian, anarchist society based on co-operation, sharing, mutual aid, etc. as the "feminisation of society."

Anarcha-feminists have noted that "feminising" society cannot be achieved without both self-management and decentralisation. This is because the patriarchal-authoritarian values and traditions they wish to overthrow are embodied and reproduced in hierarchies. Thus feminism implies

decentralisation, which in turn implies self-management. Many feminists have recognised this, as reflected in their experiments with collective forms of feminist organisations that eliminate hierarchical structure and competitive forms of decision making. Some feminists have even argued that directly democratic organisations are specifically female political forms. [see e.g. Nancy Hartsock *"Feminist Theory and the Development of Revolutionary Strategy,"* in Zeila Eisenstein, ed., **Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism**, pp. 56-77] Like all anarchists, anarcha-feminists recognise that self-liberation is the key to women's equality and thus, freedom. Thus Emma Goldman:

> *"Her development, her freedom, her independence, must come from and through herself. First, by asserting herself as a personality, and not as a sex commodity. Second, by refusing the right of anyone over her body; by refusing to bear children, unless she wants them, by refusing to be a servant to God, the State, society, the husband, the family, etc., by making her life simpler, but deeper and richer. That is, by trying to learn the meaning and substance of life in all its complexities; by freeing herself from the fear of public opinion and public condemnation."* [**Anarchism and Other Essays**, p. 211]

Anarcha-feminism tries to keep feminism from becoming influenced and dominated by authoritarian ideologies of either the right or left. It proposes direct action and self-help instead of the mass reformist campaigns favoured by the "official" feminist movement, with its creation of hierarchical and centralist organisations and its illusion that having more women bosses, politicians, and soldiers is a move towards "equality." Anarcha-feminists would point out that the so-called "management science" which women have to learn in order to become mangers

staunch Christian pacifist and anarchist who founded it in 1933. The influence of Tolstoy and religious anarchism in general can also be found in **Liberation Theology** movements in Latin and South America who combine Christian ideas with social activism amongst the working class and peasantry (although we should note that Liberation Theology is more generally inspired by state socialist ideas rather than anarchist ones).

So there is a minority tradition within anarchism which draws anarchist conclusions from religion. However, as we noted in section A.2.20, most anarchists disagree, arguing that anarchism implies atheism and it is no coincidence that the biblical thought has, historically, been associated with hierarchy and defence of earthly rulers. Thus the vast majority of anarchists have been and are atheists, for *"to worship or revere any being, natural or supernatural, will always be a form of self-subjugation and servitude that will give rise to social domination. As [Bookchin] writes: 'The moment that human beings fall on their knees before anything that is 'higher' than themselves, hierarchy will have made its first triumph over freedom.'"* [Brian Morris, **Ecology and Anarchism**, p. 137] This means that most anarchists agree with Bakunin that if God existed it would be necessary, for human freedom and dignity, to abolish it. Given what the Bible says, few anarchists think it can be used to justify libertarian ideas rather than support authoritarian ones and are not surprised that the hierarchical side of Christianity has predominated in its long (and generally oppressive) history.

Atheist anarchists point to the fact that the Bible is notorious for advocating all kinds of abuses. How does the Christian anarchist reconcile this? Are they a Christian first, or an anarchist? Equality, or adherence to the Scripture? For a believer, it seems no choice at all. If the Bible is the word of God, how can an anarchist support the more extreme positions it takes while claiming to believe in God, his authority and his laws?

others to obey the laws they (the powerful) have made – in other words, to do their will." Handing over economic life to the state would simply mean *"there will be people to whom power will be given to regulate all these matters. Some people will decide these questions, and others will obey them."* [Tolstoy, **Op. Cit.**, p. 40, p. 41, p. 43 and p. 25] He correctly prophetised that *"the only thing that will happen"* with the victory of Marxism would be *"that despotism will be passed on. Now the capitalists are ruling, but then the directors of the working class will rule."* [quoted by Marshall, **Op. Cit.**, p. 379]

From his opposition to violence, Tolstoy rejects both state and private property and urged pacifist tactics to end violence within society and create a just society. For Tolstoy, government could only be destroyed by a mass refusal to obey, by non-participation in govermmental violence and by exposing fraud of statism to the world. He rejected the idea that force should be used to resist or end the force of the state. In Nettlau's words, he *"asserted . . . **resistance to evil**; and to one of the ways of resistance - by active force - he added another way: **resistance through disobedience, the passive force.**"* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 251] In his ideas of a free society, Tolstoy was clearly influenced by rural Russian life and aimed for a society based on peasant farming of communal land, artisans and small-scale co-operatives. He rejected industrialisation as the product of state violence, arguing that *"such division of labour as now exists will . . . be impossible in a free society."* [Tolstoy, **Op. Cit.**, p. 26]

Tolstoy's ideas had a strong influence on Gandhi, who inspired his fellow country people to use non-violent resistance to kick Britain out of India. Moreover, Gandhi's vision of a free India as a federation of peasant communes is similar to Tolstoy's anarchist vision of a free society (although we must stress that Gandhi was not an anarchist). The **Catholic Worker Group** in the United States was also heavily influenced by Tolstoy (and Proudhon), as was Dorothy Day a

in capitalist companies is essentially a set of techniques for controlling and exploiting wage workers in corporate hierarchies, whereas "feminising" society requires the elimination of capitalist wage-slavery and managerial domination altogether. Anarcha-feminists realise that learning how to become an effective exploiter or oppressor is not the path to equality (as one member of the Mujeres Libres put it, *"[w]e did not want to substitute a feminist hierarchy for a masculine one"* [quoted by Martha A. Ackelsberg, **Free Women of Spain**, pp. 22-3] – also see section B.1.4 for a further discussion on patriarchy and hierarchy).

Hence anarchism's traditional hostility to liberal (or mainstream) feminism, while supporting women's liberation and equality. Federica Montseny (a leading figure in the Spanish Anarchist movement) argued that such feminism advocated equality for women, but did not challenge existing institutions. She argued that (mainstream) feminism's only ambition is to give to women of a particular class the opportunity to participate more fully in the existing system of privilege and if these institutions *"are unjust when men take advantage of them, they will still be unjust if women take advantage of them."* [quoted by Martha A. Ackelsberg, **Op. Cit.**, p. 119] Thus, for anarchists, women's freedom did not mean an equal chance to become a boss or a wage slave, a voter or a politician, but rather to be a free and equal individual co-operating as equals in free associations. *"Feminism,"* stressed Peggy Kornegger, *"doesn't mean female corporate power or a woman President; it means no corporate power and no Presidents. The Equal Rights Amendment will not transform society; it only gives women the 'right' to plug into a hierarchical economy. Challenging sexism means challenging all hierarchy – economic, political, and personal. And that means an anarcha-feminist revolution."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 27]

Anarchism, as can be seen, included a class and economic analysis which is missing from mainstream feminism while, at the same time, showing an awareness to domestic and sex-

based power relations which eluded the mainstream socialist movement. This flows from our hatred of hierarchy. As Mozzoni put it, *"Anarchy defends the cause of all the oppressed, and because of this, and in a special way, it defends your [women's] cause, oh! women, doubly oppressed by present society in both the social and private spheres."* [quoted by Moya, **Op. Cit.**, p. 203] This means that, to quote a Chinese anarchist, what anarchists *"mean by equality between the sexes is not just that the men will no longer oppress women. We also want men to no longer to be oppressed by other men, and women no longer to be oppressed by other women."* Thus women should *"completely overthrow rulership, force men to abandon all their special privileges and become equal to women, and make a world with neither the oppression of women nor the oppression of men."* [He Zhen, quoted by Peter Zarrow, **Anarchism and Chinese Political Culture**, p. 147]

So, in the historic anarchist movement, as Martha Ackelsberg notes, liberal/mainstream feminism was considered as being *"too narrowly focused as a strategy for women's emancipation; sexual struggle could not be separated from class struggle or from the anarchist project as a whole."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 119] Anarcha-feminism continues this tradition by arguing that all forms of hierarchy are wrong, not just patriarchy, and that feminism is in conflict with its own ideals if it desires simply to allow women to have the same chance of being a boss as a man does. They simply state the obvious, namely that they *"do not believe that power in the hands of women could possibly lead to a non-coercive society"* nor do they *"believe that anything good can come out of a mass movement with a leadership elite."* The *"central issues are always power and social hierarchy"* and so people *"are free only when they have power over their own lives."* [Carole Ehrlich, *"Socialism, Anarchism and Feminism"*, **Quiet Rumours: An Anarcha-Feminist Reader**, p. 44] For if, as Louise Michel put it, *"a proletarian is a slave; the wife of a proletarian is even more a slave"* ensuring that the

As with other anarchists, Tolstoy recognised that under capitalism, economic conditions *"compel [the worker] to go into temporary or perpetual slavery to a capitalist"* and so is *"obliged to sell his liberty."* This applied to both rural and urban workers, for the *"slaves of our times are not only all those factory and workshop hands, who must sell themselves completely into the power of the factory and foundry owners in order to exist; but nearly all the agricultural labourers are slaves, working as they do unceasingly to grow another's corn on another's field."* Such a system could only be maintained by violence, for *"first, the fruit of their toil is unjustly and violently taken form the workers, and then the law steps in, and these very articles which have been taken from the workmen – unjustly and by violence – are declared to be the absolute property of those who have stolen them."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 34, p. 31 and p. 38]

Tolstoy argued that capitalism morally and physically ruined individuals and that capitalists were *"slave-drivers."* He considered it impossible for a true Christian to be a capitalist, for a *"manufacturer is a man whose income consists of value squeezed out of the workers, and whose whole occupation is based on forced, unnatural labour"* and therefore, *"he must first give up ruining human lives for his own profit."* [**The Kingdom Of God is Within You**, p. 338 and p. 339] Unsurprisingly, Tolstoy argued that co-operatives were the *"only social activity which a moral, self-respecting person who doesn't want to be a party of violence can take part in."* [quoted by Peter Marshall, **Op. Cit.**, p. 378]

So, for Tolstoy, *"taxes, or land-owning or property in articles of use or in the means of production"* produces *"the slavery of our times."* However, he rejected the state socialist solution to the social problem as political power would create a new form of slavery on the ruins of the old. This was because *"the fundamental cause of slavery is legislation: the fact that there are people who have the power to make laws."* This requires *"organised violence used by people who have power, in order to compel*

our own behaviour." [**A Short History of Anarchism**, pp. 251-2] Unsurprisngly, Tolstoy thought the *"anarchists are right in everything . . . They are mistaken only in thinking that anarchy can be instituted by a revolution."* [quoted by Peter Marshall, **Op. Cit.**, p. 375]

Like all anarchists, Tolstoy was critical of private property and capitalism. He greatly admired and was heavily influenced by Proudhon, considering the latter's *"property is theft"* as *"an absolute truth"* which would *"survive as long as humanity."* [quoted by Jack Hayward, **After the French Revolution**, p. 213] Like Henry George (whose ideas, like those of Proudhon, had a strong impact on him) he opposed private property in land, arguing that *"were it not for the defence of landed property, and its consequent rise in price, people would not be crowded into such narrow spaces, but would scatter over the free land of which there is still so much in the world."* Moreover, *"in this struggle [for landed property] it is not those who work in the land, but always those who take part in government violence, who have the advantage."* Thus Tolstoy recognised that property rights in anything beyond use require state violence to protect them as possession is *"always protected by custom, public opinion, by feelings of justice and reciprocity, and they do not need to be protected by violence."* [**The Slavery of Our Times**, p. 47] Indeed, he argues that:

> *"Tens of thousands of acres of forest lands belonging to one proprietor – while thousands of people close by have no fuel – need protection by violence. So, too, do factories and works where several generations of workmen have been defrauded and are still being defrauded. Yet more do the hundreds of thousands of bushels of grain, belonging to one owner, who has held them back to sell at triple price in time of famine."* [**Op. Cit.**, pp. 47-8]

wife experiences an equal level of oppression as the husband misses the point. [**Op. Cit.**, p. 141]

Anarcha-feminists, therefore, like all anarchists oppose capitalism as a denial of liberty. Their critique of hierarchy in the society does not start and end with patriarchy. It is a case of wanting freedom everywhere, of wanting to *"[b]reak up . . . every home that rests in slavery! Every marriage that represents the sale and transfer of the individuality of one of its parties to the other! Every institution, social or civil, that stands between man and his right; every tie that renders one a master, another a serf."* [Voltairine de Cleyre, *"The Economic Tendency of Freethought"*, **The Voltairine de Cleyre Reader**, p. 72] The ideal that an "equal opportunity" capitalism would free women ignores the fact that any such system would still see working class women oppressed by bosses (be they male or female). For anarcha-feminists, the struggle for women's liberation cannot be separated from the struggle against hierarchy **as such.** As L. Susan Brown puts it:

> *"Anarchist-feminism, as an expression of the anarchist sensibility applied to feminist concerns, takes the individual as its starting point and, in opposition to relations of domination and subordination, argues for non-instrumental economic forms that preserve individual existential freedom, for both men and women."* [**The Politics of Individualism**, p. 144]

Anarcha-feminists have much to contribute to our understanding of the origins of the ecological crisis in the authoritarian values of hierarchical civilisation. For example, a number of feminist scholars have argued that the domination of nature has paralleled the domination of women, who have been identified with nature throughout history (See, for example, Caroline Merchant, **The Death of Nature**, 1980). Both women and nature are victims of the obsession with control that characterises

the authoritarian personality. For this reason, a growing number of both radical ecologists and feminists are recognising that hierarchies must be dismantled in order to achieve their respective goals.

In addition, anarcha-feminism reminds us of the importance of treating women equally with men while, at the same time, respecting women's differences from men. In other words, that recognising and respecting diversity includes women as well as men. Too often many male anarchists assume that, because they are (in theory) opposed to sexism, they are not sexist in practice. Such an assumption is false. Anarcha-feminism brings the question of consistency between theory and practice to the front of social activism and reminds us all that we must fight not only external constraints but also internal ones.

This means that anarcha-feminism urges us to practice what we preach. As Voltairine de Cleyre argued, *"I never expect men to **give** us liberty. No, Women, we are not **worth** it, until we **take** it."* This involves *"insisting on a new code of ethics founded on the law of equal freedom: a code recognising the complete individuality of woman. By making rebels wherever we can. By ourselves **living our beliefs** . . . . We are revolutionists. And we shall use propaganda by speech, deed, and most of all life – **being** what we teach."* Thus anarcha-feminists, like all anarchists, see the struggle against patriarchy as being a struggle of the oppressed for their own self-liberation, for *"**as a class** I have nothing to hope from men . . . No tyrant ever renounced his tyranny until he had to. If history ever teaches us anything it teaches this. Therefore my hope lies in creating rebellion in the breasts of women."* [*"The Gates of Freedom"*, pp. 235-250, Eugenia C. Delamotte, **Gates of Freedom**, p. 249 and p. 239] This was sadly as applicable within the anarchist movement as it was outside it in patriarchal society.

Faced with the sexism of male anarchists who spoke of sexual equality, women anarchists in Spain organised themselves into the **Mujeres Libres** organisation to combat it. They did

and the ***Anabaptists*** in the 16th century. The libertarian tradition within Christianity surfaced again in the 18th century in the writings of William Blake and the American Adam Ballou reached anarchist conclusions in his **Practical Christian Socialism** in 1854. However, Christian anarchism became a clearly defined thread of the anarchist movement with the work of the famous Russian author Leo Tolstoy.

Tolstoy took the message of the Bible seriously and came to consider that a true Christian must oppose the state. From his reading of the Bible, Tolstoy drew anarchist conclusions:

> *"ruling means using force, and using force means doing to him whom force is used, what he does not like and what he who uses force would certainly not like done to himself. Consequently ruling means doing to others what we would not they should do unto us, that is, doing wrong."* [**The Kingdom of God is Within You**, p. 242]

Thus a true Christian must refrain from governing others. From this anti-statist position he naturally argued in favour of a society self-organised from below:

> *"Why think that non-official people could not arrange their life for themselves, as well as Government people can arrange it nor for themselves but for others?"* [**The Slavery of Our Times**, p. 46]

This meant that *"people can only be freed from slavery by the abolition of Governments."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 49] Tolstoy urged non-violent action against oppression, seeing a spiritual transformation of individuals as the key to creating an anarchist society. As Max Nettlau argues, the *"great truth stressed by Tolstoy is that the recognition of the power of the good, of goodness, of solidarity - and of all that is called love - lies within **ourselves**, and that it can and must be awakened, developed and exercised **in***

have all been taken as the basis of a socialistic critique of private property and capitalism. Indeed, the early Christian church (which could be considered as a liberation movement of slaves, although one that was later co-opted into a state religion) was based upon communistic sharing of material goods, a theme which has continually appeared within radical Christian movements inspired, no doubt, by such comments as *"all that believed were together, and had all things in common, and they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them all, according as every man has need"* and *"the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul, not one of them said that all of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things in common."* (Acts, 2:44,45; 4:32)

Unsurprisingly, the Bible would have been used to express radical libertarian aspirations of the oppressed, which, in later times, would have taken the form of anarchist or Marxist terminology). As Bookchin notes in his discussion of Christianity's contributions to *"the legacy of freedom," "[b]y spawning nonconformity, heretical conventicles, and issues of authority over person and belief, Christianity created not merely a centralised authoritarian Papacy, but also its very antithesis: a quasi-religious anarchism."* Thus *"Christianity's mixed message can be grouped into two broad and highly conflicting systems of belief. On one side there was a radical, activistic, communistic, and libertarian vision of the Christian life"* and *"on the other side there was a conservative, quietistic, materially unwordly, and hierarchical vision."* [**The Ecology of Freedom**, p. 266 and pp. 274-5]

Thus clergyman's John Ball's egalitarian comments (as quoted by Peter Marshall [**Op. Cit.**, p. 89]) during the Peasant Revolt in 1381 in England:

> *"When Adam delved and Eve span,*
> *Who was then a gentleman?"*

The history of Christian anarchism includes the ***Heresy of the Free Spirit*** in the Middle Ages, numerous Peasant revolts

not believe in leaving their liberation to some day after the revolution. Their liberation was a integral part of that revolution and had to be started today. In this they repeated the conclusions of anarchist women in Illinois Coal towns who grew tried of hearing their male comrades *"shout in favour"* of sexual equality *"in the future society"* while doing nothing about it in the here and now. They used a particularly insulting analogy, comparing their male comrades to priests who *"make false promises to the starving masses . . . [that] there will be rewards in paradise."* The argued that mothers should make their daughters *"understand that the difference in sex does not imply inequality in rights"* and that as well as being *"rebels against the social system of today,"* they *"should fight especially against the oppression of men who would like to retain women as their moral and material inferior."* [Ersilia Grandi, quoted by Caroline Waldron Merithew, **Anarchist Motherhood**, p. 227] They formed the ***"Luisa Michel"*** group to fight against capitalism and patriarchy in the upper Illinois valley coal towns over three decades before their Spanish comrades organised themselves.

For anarcha-feminists, combating sexism is a key aspect of the struggle for freedom. It is not, as many Marxist socialists argued before the rise of feminism, a diversion from the "real" struggle against capitalism which would somehow be automatically solved after the revolution. It is an essential part of the struggle:

> *"We do not need any of your titles . . . We want none of them. What we do want is knowledge and education and liberty. We know what our rights are and we demand them. Are we not standing next to you fighting the supreme fight? Are you not strong enough, men, to make part of that supreme fight a struggle for the rights of women? And then men and women together will gain the rights of all humanity."* [Louise Michel, **Op. Cit.**, p. 142]

A key part of this revolutionising modern society is the transformation of the current relationship between the sexes. Marriage is a particular evil for *"the old form of marriage, based on the Bible, 'till death doth part,' . . . [is] an institution that stands for the sovereignty of the man over the women, of her complete submission to his whims and commands."* Women are reduced *"to the function of man's servant and bearer of his children."* [Goldman, **Op. Cit.**, pp. 220-1] Instead of this, anarchists proposed ***"free love,"*** that is couples and families based on free agreement between equals than one partner being in authority and the other simply obeying. Such unions would be without sanction of church or state for *"two beings who love each other do not need permission from a third to go to bed."* [Mozzoni, quoted by Moya, **Op. Cit.**, p. 200]

Equality and freedom apply to more than just relationships. For *"if social progress consists in a constant tendency towards the equalisation of the liberties of social units, then the demands of progress are not satisfied so long as half society, Women, is in subjection. . . . Woman . . . is beginning to feel her servitude; that there is a requisite acknowledgement to be won from her master before he is put down and she exalted to – Equality. This acknowledgement is,* ***the freedom to control her own person****. "* [Voltairine de Cleyre, *"The Gates of Freedom"*, **Op. Cit.**, p. 242] Neither men nor state nor church should say what a woman does with her body. A logical extension of this is that women must have control over their own reproductive organs. Thus anarcha-feminists, like anarchists in general, are pro-choice and pro-reproductive rights (i.e. the right of a woman to control her own reproductive decisions). This is a long standing position. Emma Goldman was persecuted and incarcerated because of her public advocacy of birth control methods and the extremist notion that women should decide when they become pregnant (as feminist writer Margaret Anderson put it, *"In 1916, Emma Goldman was sent to prison for advocating that 'women need not always keep their mouth shut and their wombs open.'"*).

A.3.7 Are there religious anarchists?

Yes, there are. While most anarchists have opposed religion and the idea of God as deeply anti-human and a justification for earthly authority and slavery, a few believers in religion have taken their ideas to anarchist conclusions. Like all anarchists, these religious anarchists have combined an opposition to the state with a critical position with regards to private property and inequality. In other words, anarchism is not necessarily atheistic. Indeed, according to Jacques Ellul, *"biblical thought leads directly to anarchism, and that this is the only 'political anti-political' position in accord with Christian thinkers."* [quoted by Peter Marshall, **Demanding the Impossible**, p. 75]

There are many different types of anarchism inspired by religious ideas. As Peter Marshall notes, the *"first clear expression of an anarchist sensibility may be traced back to the Taoists in ancient China from about the sixth century BC"* and *"Buddhism, particularly in its Zen form, . . . has . . . a strong libertarian spirit."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 53 and p. 65] Some, like the anti-globalisation activist Starhawk, combine their anarchist ideas with Pagan and Spiritualist influences. However, religious anarchism usually takes the form of Christian Anarchism, which we will concentrate on here.

Christian Anarchists take seriously Jesus' words to his followers that *"kings and governors have domination over men; let there be none like that among you."* Similarly, Paul's dictum that there *"is no authority except God"* is taken to its obvious conclusion with the denial of state authority within society. Thus, for a true Christian, the state is usurping God's authority and it is up to each individual to govern themselves and discover that (to use the title of Tolstoy's famous book) **The Kingdom of God is within you**.

Similarly, the voluntary poverty of Jesus, his comments on the corrupting effects of wealth and the Biblical claim that the world was created for humanity to be enjoyed in common

sive/authoritarian personality feels most comfortable with. Unfortunately, the majority of human beings fear real freedom, and indeed, do not know what to do with it – as is shown by a long string of failed revolutions and freedom movements in which the revolutionary ideals of freedom, democracy, and equality were betrayed and a new hierarchy and ruling class were quickly created. These failures are generally attributed to the machinations of reactionary politicians and capitalists, and to the perfidy of revolutionary leaders; but reactionary politicians only attract followers because they find a favourable soil for the growth of their authoritarian ideals in the character structure of ordinary people.

Hence the prerequisite of an anarchist revolution is a period of consciousness-raising in which people gradually become aware of submissive/authoritarian traits within themselves, see how those traits are reproduced by conditioning, and understand how they can be mitigated or eliminated through new forms of culture, particularly new child-rearing and educational methods. We will explore this issue more fully in section B.1.5 (What is the mass-psychological basis for authoritarian civilisation?), J.6 (What methods of child rearing do anarchists advocate?), and J.5.13 (What are Modern Schools?)

Cultural anarchist ideas are shared by almost all schools of anarchist thought and consciousness-raising is considered an essential part of any anarchist movement. For anarchists, its important to *"build the new world in the shell of the old"* in all aspects of our lives and creating an anarchist culture is part of that activity. Few anarchists, however, consider consciousness-raising as enough in itself and so combine cultural anarchist activities with organising, using direct action and building libertarian alternatives in capitalist society. The anarchist movement is one that combines practical self-activity with cultural work, with both activities feeding into and supporting the other.

Anarcha-feminism does not stop there. Like anarchism in general, it aims at changing **all** aspects of society not just what happens in the home. For, as Goldman asked, *"how much independence is gained if the narrowness and lack of freedom of the home is exchanged for the narrowness and lack of freedom of the factory, sweat-shop, department store, or office?"* Thus women's equality and freedom had to be fought everywhere and defended against all forms of hierarchy. Nor can they be achieved by voting. Real liberation, argue anarcha-feminists, is only possible by direct action and anarcha-feminism is based on women's self-activity and self-liberation for while the *"right to vote, or equal civil rights, may be good demands . . . true emancipation begins neither at the polls nor in the courts. It begins in woman's soul . . . her freedom will reach as far as her power to achieve freedom reaches."* [Goldman, **Op. Cit.**, p. 216 and p. 224]

The history of the women's movement proves this. Every gain has come from below, by the action of women themselves. As Louise Michel put it, *"[w]e women are not bad revolutionaries. Without begging anyone, we are taking our place in the struggles; otherwise, we could go ahead and pass motions until the world ends and gain nothing."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 139] If women waited for others to act for them their social position would never have changed. This includes getting the vote in the first place. Faced with the militant suffrage movement for women's votes, British anarchist Rose Witcop recognised that it was *"true that this movement shows us that women who so far have been so submissive to their masters, the men, are beginning to wake up at last to the fact they are not inferior to those masters."* Yet she argued that women would not be freed by votes but *"by their own strength."* [quoted by Sheila Rowbotham, **Hidden from History**, pp. 100-1 and p. 101] The women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s showed the truth of that analysis. In spite of equal voting rights, women's social place had remained unchanged since the 1920s.

Ultimately, as Anarchist Lily Gair Wilkinson stressed, the *"call for 'votes' can never be a call to freedom. For what is it to vote? To vote is to register assent to being ruled by one legislator or another?"* [quoted by Sheila Rowbotham, **Op. Cit.**, p. 102] It does not get to the heart of the problem, namely hierarchy and the authoritarian social relationships it creates of which patriarchy is only a subset of. Only by getting rid of all bosses, political, economic, social and sexual can **genuine** freedom for women be achieved and *"make it possible for women to be human in the truest sense. Everything within her that craves assertion and activity should reach its fullest expression; all artificial barriers should be broken, and the road towards greater freedom cleared of every trace of centuries of submission and slavery."* [Emma Goldman, **Op. Cit.**, p. 214]

A.3.6 What is Cultural Anarchism?

For our purposes, we will define cultural anarchism as the promotion of anti-authoritarian values through those aspects of society traditionally regarded as belonging to the sphere of "culture" rather than "economics" or "politics" – for example, through art, music, drama, literature, education, child-rearing practices, sexual morality, technology, and so forth.

Cultural expressions are anarchistic to the extent that they deliberately attack, weaken, or subvert the tendency of most traditional cultural forms to promote authoritarian values and attitudes, particularly domination and exploitation. Thus a novel that portrays the evils of militarism can be considered as cultural anarchism if it goes beyond the simple "war-is-hell" model and allows the reader to see how militarism is connected with authoritarian institutions (e.g. capitalism and statism) or methods of authoritarian conditioning (e.g. upbringing in the traditional patriarchal family). Or, as John Clark expresses it, cultural anarchism implies *"the development of arts, media, and other symbolic forms that expose various aspects of the system of domination and contrast them with a system of values based on freedom and community."* This *"**cultural** struggle"* would be part of a general struggle *"to combat the material and ideological power of all dominating classes, whether economic, political, racial, religious, or sexual, with a multi-dimensional practice of liberation."* In other words, an *"expanded conception of class analysis"* and *"an amplified practice of class struggle"* which includes, but is not limited to, *"**economic** actions like strikes, boycotts, job actions, occupation, organisations of direct action groups and federations of libertarian workers' groups and development of workers' assemblies, collectives and co-operatives"* and *"**political** activity"* like the *"active interference with implementation of repressive governmental policies,"* the *"non-compliance and resistance against regimentation and bureaucratisation of society"* and *"participation in movements for increasing direct participation in decision-making and local control."* [**The Anarchist Moment**, p. 31]

Cultural anarchism is important – indeed essential – because authoritarian values are embedded in a total system of domination with many aspects besides the political and economic. Hence those values cannot be eradicated even by a combined economic and political revolution if there it is not also accompanied by profound psychological changes in the majority of the population. For mass acquiescence in the current system is rooted in the psychic structure of human beings (their *"character structure,"* to use Wilhelm Reich's expression), which is produced by many forms of conditioning and socialisation that have developed with patriarchal-authoritarian civilisation during the past five or six thousand years.

In other words, even if capitalism and the state were overthrown tomorrow, people would soon create new forms of authority in their place. For authority – a strong leader, a chain of command, someone to give orders and relieve one of the responsibility of thinking for oneself – are what the submis-

Like the anarchists, they argued that Russia was a state-capitalist party dictatorship and had nothing to be with socialism. And, again like anarchists, the council communists argue that the process of building a new society, like the revolution itself, is either the work of the people themselves or doomed from the start. As with the anarchists, they too saw the Bolshevik take-over of the soviets (like that of the trade unions) as subverting the revolution and beginning the restoration of oppression and exploitation.

To discover more about council communism, the works of Paul Mattick are essential reading. While best known as a writer on Marxist economic theory in such works as **Marx and Keynes**, **Economic Crisis and Crisis Theory** and **Economics, Politics and the Age of Inflation**, Mattick had been a council communist since the German revolution of 1919/1920. His books **Anti-Bolshevik Communism** and **Marxism: The Last Refuge of the Bourgeoisie?** are excellent introductions to his political ideas. Also essential reading is Anton Pannekeok's works. His classic **Workers' Councils** explains council communism from first principles while his **Lenin as Philosopher** dissects Lenin's claims to being a Marxist (Serge Bricianer, **Pannekoek and the Workers' Councils** is the best study of the development of Panekoek's ideas). In the UK, the militant suffragette Sylvia Pankhurst became a council communist under the impact of the Russian Revolution and, along with anarchists like Guy Aldred, led the opposition to the importation of Leninism into the communist movement there (see Mark Shipway's **Anti-Parliamentary Communism: The Movement for Workers Councils in Britain, 1917-45** for more details of libertarian communism in the UK). Otto Ruhle and Karl Korsch are also important thinkers in this tradition.

Building upon the ideas of council communism, the Situationists developed their ideas in important new directions. Working in the late 1950s and 1960s, they combined council

how much of the present could continue without precisely that coercion? – an existence without constraints is an immediate, central objective." [**Op. Cit.**] How that is compatible with the arguing that industry would be maintained for a time is left unasked, never mind unanswered. And if "work" continues, how is this compatible with the typical primitivist dismissal of "traditional" anarchism, namely that self-management is managing your own alienation and that no one will want to work in a factory or in a mine and, therefore, coercion will have to be used to make them do so? Does working in a self-managed workplace somehow become less alienating and authoritarian during a primitivist transition?

It is an obvious fact that the human population size cannot be reduced significantly by voluntary means in a short period of time. For primitivism to be viable, world population levels need to drop by something like 90%. This implies a drastic reduction of population will take decades, if not centuries, to achieve voluntarily. Given that it is unlikely that (almost) everyone on the planet will decide not to have children, this time scale will almost certainly be centuries and so agriculture and most industries will have to continue (and an exodus from the cities would be impossible immediately). Likewise, reliable contraceptives are a product of modern technology and, consequently, the means of producing them would have to maintained over that time – unless primitivists argue that along with refusing to have children, people will also refuse to have sex.

Then there is the legacy of industrial society, which simply cannot be left to decay on its own. To take just one obvious example, leaving nuclear power plants to melt down would hardly be eco-friendly. Moreover, it is doubtful that the ruling elite will just surrender its power without resistance and, consequently, any social revolution would need to defend itself against attempts to reintroduce hierarchy. Needless to say, a revolution which shunned all organisation and industry as in-

herently authoritarian would not be able to do this (it would have been impossible to produce the necessary military supplies to fight Franco's fascist forces during the Spanish Revolution if the workers had not converted and used their workplaces to do so, to note another obvious example).

Then there is another, key, contradiction. For if you accept that there is a need for a transition from 'here' to 'there' then primitivism automatically excludes itself from the anarchist tradition. The reason is simple. Moore asserts that *"mass society"* involves *"people working, living in artificial, technologised environments, and [being] subject to forms of coercion and control."* [**Op. Cit.**] So if what primitivists argue about technology, industry and mass society are all true, then any primitivist transition would, by definition, not be libertarian. This is because *"mass society"* will have to remain for some time (at the very least decades, more likely centuries) after a successful revolution and, consequently from a primitivist perspective, be based on *"forms of coercion and control."* There is an ideology which proclaims the need for a transitional system which will be based on coercion, control and hierarchy which will, in time, disappear into a stateless society. It also, like primitivism, stresses that industry and large scale organisation is impossible without hierarchy and authority. That ideology is Marxism. Thus it seems ironic to "classical" anarchists to hear self-proclaimed anarchists repeating Engels arguments against Bakunin as arguments for "anarchy" (see section H.4 for a discussion of Engels claims that industry excludes autonomy).

So if, as seems likely, any transition will take centuries to achieve then the primivitist critique of "traditional" anarchism becomes little more than a joke – and a hindrance to meaningful anarchist practice and social change. It shows the contradiction at the heart of primitivism. While its advocates attack other anarchists for supporting technology, organisation, self-management of work, industrialisation and so on, they are themselves are dependent on the things they oppose as part of

heart of their economic vision and, consequently, are closer to anarchism than most socialists.

A.4.4 Are there any Marxist thinkers close to anarchism?

None of the libertarian socialists we highlighted in the last section were Marxists. This is unsurprising as most forms of Marxism are authoritarian. However, this is not the case for all schools of Marxism. There are important sub-branches of Marxism which shares the anarchist vision of a self-managed society. These include Council Communism, Situationism and Autonomism. Perhaps significantly, these few Marxist tendencies which are closest to anarchism are, like the branches of anarchism itself, not named after individuals. We will discuss each in turn.

Council Communism was born in the German Revolution of 1919 when Marxists inspired by the example of the Russian soviets and disgusted by the centralism, opportunism and betrayal of the mainstream Marxist social-democrats, drew similar anti-parliamentarian, direct actionist and decentralised conclusions to those held by anarchists since Bakunin. Like Marx's libertarian opponent in the First International, they argued that a federation of workers' councils would form the basis of a socialist society and, consequently, saw the need to build militant workplace organisations to promote their formation. Lenin attacked these movements and their advocates in his diatribe **Left-wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder**, which council communist Herman Gorter demolished in his **An Open Letter to Comrade Lenin**. By 1921, the council communists broke with the Bolshevism that had already effectively expelled them from both the national Communist Parties and the Communist International.

key pamphlets which shaped the thinking of a generation of anarchists and other libertarian socialists. These included **Paris: May 1968**, his brilliant eyewitness account of the near-revolution in France, the essential **The Bolsheviks and Workers' Control** in which he exposed Lenin's hostility to workers' self-management, and **The Irrational in Politics**, a restatement and development of the early work of Wilhelm Reich. These and many more articles have been collected in the book **For Workers' Power: The Selected Writings of Maurice Brinton**, edited by David Goodway.

The American radical historian Howard Zinn has sometimes called himself an anarchist and is well informed about the anarchist tradition (he wrote an excellent introductory essay on *"Anarchism"* for a US edition of a Herbert Read book) . As well as his classic **A People's History of the United States**, his writings of civil disobedience and non-violent direct action are essential. An excellent collection of essays by this libertarian socialist scholar has been produced under the title **The Zinn Reader**. Another notable libertarian socialists close to anarchism are Edward Carpenter (see, for example, Sheila Rowbotham's **Edward Carpenter: Prophet of the New Life**) and Simone Weil (**Oppression and Liberty**)

It would also be worthwhile to mention those market socialists who, like anarchists, base their socialism on workers' self-management. Rejecting central planning, they have turned back to the ideas of industrial democracy and market socialism advocated by the likes of Proudhon (although, coming from a Marxist background, they generally fail to mention the link which their central-planning foes stress). Allan Engler (in **Apostles of Greed**) and David Schweickart (in **Against Capitalism** and **After Capitalism**) have provided useful critiques of capitalism and presented a vision of socialism rooted in co-operatively organised workplaces. While retaining an element of government and state in their political ideas, these socialists have placed economic self-management at the

any humane transition to a primitivist society. And given the passion with which they attack other anarchists on these matters, unsurprisingly the whole notion of a primitivist transition period seems impossible to other anarchists. To denounce technology and industrialism as inherently authoritarian and then turn round and advocate their use after a revolution simply does not make sense from a logical or libertarian perspective.

Thus the key problem with primitivism can be seen. It offers no practical means of achieving its goals in a libertarian manner. As Knabb summarises, *"[w]hat begins as a valid questioning of excessive faith in science and technology ends up as a desperate and even less justified faith in the return of a primeval paradise, accompanied by a failure to engage the present system in any but an abstract, apocalyptical way."* To avoid this, it is necessary to take into account where we are now and, consequently, we will have to *"seriously consider how we will deal with all the practical problems that will be posed in the interim."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 80 and p. 79] Sadly, primitivist ideology excludes this possibility by dismissing the starting point any real revolution would begin from as being inherently authoritarian. Moreover, they are blocking genuine social change by ensuring that no mass movement would ever be revolutionary enough to satisfy their criteria:

> *"Those who proudly proclaim their 'total opposition' to all compromise, all authority, all organisation, all theory, all technology, etc., usually turn out to have no **revolutionary** perspective whatsoever – no practical conception of how the present system might be overthrown or how a post-revolutionary society might work. Some even attempt to justify this lack by declaring that a mere revolution could never be radical enough to satisfy their eternal ontological rebelliousness. Such all-or-nothing bombast may temporarily impress a few spectators,*

but its ultimate effect is simply to make people blasé." [Knabb, **Op. Cit.**, pp. 31-32]

Then there is the question of the means suggested for achieving primitivism. Moore argues that the *"kind of world envisaged by anarcho-primitivism is one unprecedented in human experience in terms of the degree and types of freedom anticipated ... so there can't be any limits on the forms of resistance and insurgency that might develop."* [**Op. Cit.**] Non-primitivists reply by saying that this implies primitivists don't know what they want nor how to get there. Equally, they stress that there **must be** limits on what are considered acceptable forms of resistance. This is because means shape the ends created and so authoritarian means will result in authoritarian ends. Tactics are not neutral and support for certain tactics betray an authoritarian perspective.

This can be seen from the UK magazine **"Green Anarchist,"** part of the extreme end of "Primitivism." Due to its inherent unattractiveness for most people, it could never come about by libertarian means (i.e. by the free choice of individuals who create it by their own acts) and so cannot be anarchist as very few people would actually voluntarily embrace such a situation. This led to **"Green Anarchist"** developing a form of eco-vanguardism in order, to use Rousseau's expression, to "force people to be free." This was expressed when the magazine supported the actions and ideas of the (non-anarchist) Unabomber and published an article (*"The Irrationalists"*) by one its editors stating that *"the Oklahoma bombers had the right idea. The pity was that they did not blast any more government offices . . . The Tokyo sarin cult had the right idea. The pity was that in testing the gas a year prior to the attack they gave themselves away."* [**Green Anarchist**, no. 51, p. 11] A defence of these remarks was published in the next issue and a subsequent exchange of letters in the US-based **Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed** magazine (numbers 48 to 52) saw the other editor justify this

Crafts" movement, Morris argued for humanising work and it was, to quoted the title of one of his most famous essays, as case of **Useful Work vrs Useless Toil**. His utopia novel **News from Nowhere** paints a compelling vision of a libertarian communist society where industrialisation has been replaced with a communal craft-based economy. It is a utopia which has long appealed to most social anarchists. For a discussion of Morris' ideas, placed in the context of his famous utopia, see **William Morris and News from Nowhere: A Vision for Our Time** (Stephen Coleman and Paddy O'Sullivan (eds.))

Also of note is the Greek thinker Cornelius Castoriadis. Originally a Trotskyist, Castoriadis evaluation of Trotsky's deeply flawed analysis of Stalinist Russia as a degenerated workers' state lead him to reject first Leninism and then Marxism itself. This led him to libertarian conclusions, seeing the key issue not who owns the means of production but rather hierarchy. Thus the class struggle was between those with power and those subject to it. This led him to reject Marxist economics as its value analysis abstracted from (i.e. ignored!) the class struggle at the heart of production (Autonomist Marxism rejects this interpretation of Marx, but they are the only Marxists who do). Castoriadis, like social anarchists, saw the future society as one based on radical autonomy, generalised self-management and workers' councils organised from the bottom up. His three volume collected works (**Political and Social Writings**) are essential reading for anyone interested in libertarian socialist politics and a radical critique of Marxism.

Special mention should also be made of Maurice Brinton, who, as well as translating many works by Castoriadis, was a significant libertarian socialist thinker and activist as well. An ex-Trotskyist like Castoriadis, Brinton carved out a political space for a revolutionary libertarian socialism, opposed to the bureaucratic reformism of Labour as well as the police-state "socialism" of Stalinism and the authoritarianism of the Leninism which produced it. He produced numerous

which also included author's S.G. Hobson and A.R. Orage (Geoffrey Osteregaard's **The Tradition of Workers' Control** provides an good summary of the ideas of Guild Socialism). Bertrand Russell, another supporter of Guild Socialism, was attracted to anarchist ideas and wrote an extremely informed and thoughtful discussion of anarchism, syndicalism and Marxism in his classic book **Roads to Freedom**.

While Russell was pessimistic about the possibility of anarchism in the near future, he felt it was *"the ultimate idea to which society should approximate."* As a Guild Socialist, he took it for granted that there could *"be no real freedom or democracy until the men who do the work in a business also control its management."* His vision of a good society is one any anarchist would support: *"a world in which the creative spirit is alive, in which life is an adventure full of joy and hope, based upon the impulse to construct than upon the desire to retain what we possess or to seize what is possessed by others. It must be a world in which affection has free play, in which love is purged of the instinct for domination, in which cruelty and envy have been dispelled by happiness and the unfettered development of all the instincts that build up life and fill it with mental delights."* [quoted by Noam Chomsky, **Problems of Knowledge and Freedom**, pp. 59-60, p. 61 and p. x] An informed and interesting writer on many subjects, his thought and social activism has influenced many other thinkers, including Noam Chomsky (whose **Problems of Knowledge and Freedom** is a wide ranging discussion on some of the topics Russell addressed).

Another important British libertarian socialist thinker and activist was William Morris. Morris, a friend of Kropotkin, was active in the **Socialist League** and led its anti-parliamentarian wing. While stressing he was not an anarchist, there is little real difference between the ideas of Morris and most anarcho-communists (Morris said he was a communist and saw no need to append "anarchist" to it as, for him, communism was democratic and liberatory). A prominent member of the "Arts and

sick, authoritarian nonsense as simply examples of *"unmediated resistance"* conducted *"under conditions of extreme repression."* Whatever happened to the anarchist principle that means shape the ends? This means there **are** *"limits"* on tactics, as some tactics are not and can never be libertarian.

However, few primitivists take such an extreme position. Most "primitivist" anarchists rather than being anti-technology and anti-civilisation as such instead (to use David Watson's expression) believe it is a case of the *"affirmation of aboriginal lifeways"* and of taking a far more critical approach to issues such as technology, rationality and progress than that associated with Social Ecology. These eco-anarchists reject *"a dogmatic primitivism which claims we can return in some linear way to our primordial roots"* just as much as the idea of "progress," *"**superseding** both Enlightenment and Counter-Enlightenment"* ideas and traditions. For them, Primitivism *"reflects not only a glimpse at life before the rise of the state, but also a legitimate response to real conditions of life under civilisation"* and so we should respect and learn from *"palaeolithic and neolithic wisdom traditions"* (such as those associated with Native American tribes and other aboriginal peoples). While we *"cannot, and would not want to abandon secular modes of thinking and experiencing the world. . . we cannot reduce the experience of life, and the fundamental, inescapable questions **why** we live, and **how** we live, to secular terms. . . Moreover, the boundary between the spiritual and the secular is not so clear. A dialectical understanding that we are our history would affirm an inspirited reason that honours not only atheistic Spanish revolutionaries who died for **el ideal,** but also religious pacifist prisoners of conscience, Lakota ghost dancers, taoist hermits and executed sufi mystics."* [David Watson, **Beyond Bookchin: Preface for a future social ecology**, p. 240, p. 103, p. 240 and pp. 66-67]

Such "primitivist" anarchism is associated with a range of magazines, mostly US-based, like **Fifth Estate**. For example,

on the question of technology, they argue that *"[w]hile market capitalism was a spark that set the fire, and remains at the centre of the complex, it is only part of something larger: the forced adaptation of organic human societies to an economic-instrumental civilisation and its mass technics, which are not only hierarchical and external but increasingly 'cellular' and internal. It makes no sense to layer the various elements of this process in a mechanistic hierarchy of first cause and secondary effects."* [Watson, **Op. Cit.**, pp. 127-8] For this reason primitivists are more critical of all aspects of technology, including calls by social ecologists for the use of **appropriate** technology essential in order to liberate humanity and the planet:

> *"To speak of technological society is in fact to refer to **the technics generated within capitalism,** which in turn generate new forms of capital. The notion of a distinct realm of social relations that determine this technology is not only ahistorical and undialectical, it reflects a kind of simplistic base/superstructure schema."* [Watson, **Op. Cit.**, p. 124]

Thus it is not a case of who **uses** technology which determines its effects, rather the effects of technology are determined to a large degree by the society that creates it. In other words, technology is selected which tends to re-enforce hierarchical power as it is those in power who generally select which technology is introduced within society (saying that, oppressed people have this excellent habit of turning technology against the powerful and technological change and social struggle are inter-related – see section D.10). Thus even the use of appropriate technology involves more than selecting from the range of available technology at hand, as these technologies have certain effects regardless of who uses them. Rather it is a question of critically evaluating all aspects of technology and modifying and rejecting it as required to maximise

A.4.3 Are there any socialist thinkers close to anarchism?

Anarchism developed in response to the development of capitalism and it is in the non-anarchist socialist tradition which anarchism finds most fellow travellers.

The earliest British socialists (the so-called Ricardian Socialists) following in the wake of Robert Owen held ideas which were similar to those of anarchists. For example, Thomas Hodgskin expounded ideas similar to Proudhon's mutualism while William Thompson developed a non-state, communal form of socialism based on *"communities of mutual co-operative"* which had similarities to anarcho-communism (Thompson had been a mutualist before becoming a communist in light of the problems even a non-capitalist market would have). John Francis Bray is also of interest, as is the radical agrarianist Thomas Spence who developed a communal form of land-based socialism which expounded many ideas usually associated with anarchism (see *"The Agrarian Socialism of Thomas Spence"* by Brian Morris in his book **Ecology and Anarchism**). Moreover, the early British trade union movement *"developed, stage by stage, a theory of syndicalism"* 40 years before Bakunin and the libertarian wing of the First International did. [E.P. Thompson, **The Making of the English Working Class**, p. 912] Noel Thompson's **The Real Rights of Man** is a good summary of all these thinkers and movements, as is E.P. Thompson's classic social history of working class life (and politics) of this period, **The Making of the English Working Class**.

Libertarian ideas did not die out in Britain in the 1840s. There was also the quasi-syndicalists of the Guild Socialists of the 1910s and 1920s who advocated a decentralised communal system with workers' control of industry. G.D.H. Cole's **Guild Socialism Restated** is the most famous work of this school,

competitiveness, the ideology of 'possessive individualism' – all must be regarded as fundamentally antihuman. Libertarian socialism is properly to be regarded as the inheritor of the liberal ideals of the Enlightenment." [*"Notes on Anarchism"*, **Op. Cit.**, p. 157]

Thus anarchism shares commonality with pre-capitalist and democratic liberal forms. The hopes of these liberals were shattered with the development of capitalism. To quote Rudolf Rocker's analysis:

> *"Liberalism and Democracy were pre-eminently political concepts, and since the great majority of the original adherents of both maintained the right of ownership in the old sense, these had to renounce them both when economic development took a course which could not be practically reconciled with the original principles of Democracy, and still less with those of Liberalism. Democracy, with its motto of 'all citizens equal before the law,' and Liberalism with its 'right of man over his own person,' both shipwrecked on the realities of the capitalist economic form. So long as millions of human beings in every country had to sell their labour-power to a small minority of owners, and to sink into the most wretched misery if they could find no buyers, the so-called 'equality before the law' remains merely a pious fraud, since the laws are made by those who find themselves in possession of the social wealth. But in the same way there can also be no talk of a 'right over one's own person,' for that right ends when one is compelled to submit to the economic dictation of another if he does not want to starve."* [**Anarcho-Syndicalism**, p. 10]

individual freedom, empowerment and happiness. Few Social Ecologists would disagree with this approach, though, and differences are usually a question of emphasis rather than a deep political point.

However, few anarchists are convinced by an ideology which, as Brian Morris notes, dismisses the *"last eight thousand years or so of human history"* as little more than a source *"of tyranny, hierarchical control, mechanised routine devoid of any spontaneity. All those products of the human creative imagination – farming, art, philosophy, technology, science, urban living, symbolic culture – are viewed negatively by Zerzan – in a monolithic sense."* While there is no reason to worship progress, there is just as little need to dismiss all change and development out of hand as oppressive. Nor are they convinced by Zerzan's *"selective culling of the anthropological literature."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 38] Most anarchists would concurr with Murray Bookchin:

> *"The ecology movement will never gain any real influence or have any significant impact on society if it advances a message of despair rather than hope, of a regressive and impossible return to primordial human cultures, rather than a commitment to human progress and to a unique* ***human*** *empathy for life as a whole . . . We must recover the utopian impulses, the hopefulness, the appreciation of what is good, what is worth rescuing in yumn civilisation, as well as what must be rejected, if the ecology movement is to play a transformative and creative role in human affairs. For without changing society, we will not change the diastrous ecological direction in which capitalism is moving."* [**The Ecology of Freedom**, p. 63]

In addition, a position of "turning back the clock" is deeply flawed, for while some aboriginal societies are very anarchistic,

not all are. As anarchist anthropologist David Graeber points out, *"we know almost nothing about like in Palaeolithic, other than the sort of thing that can be gleaned from studying very old skulls . . . But what we see in the more recent ethnographic records is endless variety. There were hunter-gatherer societies with nobles and slaves, there are agrarian societies that are fiercely egalitarian. Even in . . . Amazonia, one finds some groups who can justly be described as anarchists, like the Piaroa, living alongside others (say, the warlike Sherentre, who are clearly anything but."* [**Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology**, pp. 53-4] Even if we speculate, like Zerzan, that if we go back far enough we would find all of humanity in anarchistic tribes, the fact remains that certain of these societies did develop into statist, propertarian ones implying that a future anarchist society that is predominantly inspired by and seek to reproduce key elements of prehistoric forms of anarchy is not the answer as "civilisation" may develop again due to the same social or environmental factors.

Primitivism confuses two radically different positions, namely support for a literal return to primitive lifeways and the use of examples from primitive life as a tool for social critique. Few anarchists would disagree with the second position as they recognise that current does not equal better and, consequently, past cultures and societies can have positive (as well as negative) aspects to them which can shed light on what a genuinely human society can be like. Similarly if "primitivism" simply involved questioning technology along with authority, few would disagree. However, this sensible position is, in the main, subsumed within the first one, the idea that an anarchist society would be a literal return to hunter-gatherer society. That this is the case can be seen from primitivist writings (some primitivists say that they are not suggesting the Stone Age as a model for their desired society nor a return to gathering and hunting, yet they seem to exclude any other options by their critique).

shall have entire control over the concern, and the others shall be bound to obey his rule." [*"The Subjection of Women,"* quoted by Susan L. Brown, **The Politics of Individualism**, pp. 45-6]

Yet his own example showed the flaw in liberal support for capitalism, for the employee ***is*** subject to a relationship in which power accrues to one party and obedience to another. Unsurprisingly, therefore, he argued that the *"form of association . . . which is mankind continue to improve, must be expected in the end to predominate, is not that which can exist between a capitalist as chief, and workpeople without a voice in management, but the association of the labourers themselves on terms of equality, collectively owning the capital . . . and working under managers elected and removable by themselves."* [**The Principles of Political Economy**, p. 147] Autocratic management during working hours is hardly compatible with Mill's maxim that *"[o]ver himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign."* Mill's opposition to centralised government and wage slavery brought his ideas closer to anarchism than most liberals, as did his comment that the *"social principle of the future"* was *"how to unite the greatest individual liberty of action with a common ownership in the raw materials of the globe, and equal participation of all in the benefits of combined labour."* [quoted by Peter Marshall, **Demanding the Impossible**, p. 164] His defence of individuality, **On Liberty**, is a classic, if flawed, work and his analysis of socialist tendencies (*"Chapters on Socialism"*) is worth reading for its evaluation of their pros and cons from a (democratic) liberal perspective.

Like Proudhon, Mill was a forerunner of modern-day market socialism and a firm supporter of decentralisation and social participation. This, argues Chomsky, is unsurprising for pre-capitalist classical liberal thought *"is opposed to state intervention in social life, as a consequence of deeper assumptions about the human need for liberty, diversity, and free association. On the same assumptions, capitalist relations of production, wage labour,*

were *"the advocates of the rising capitalist state, which Jefferson regarded with dismay, recognising the obvious contradiction between democracy and the capitalism."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 88] Claudio J. Katz's essay on *"Thomas Jefferson's Liberal Anticapitalism"* usefully explores these issues. [**American Journal of Political Science**, vol. 47, No. 1 (Jan, 2003), pp. 1-17]

Jefferson even went so far as to argue that *"a little rebellion now and then is a good thing . . . It is a medicine necessary for the sound health of government . . . The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants."* [quoted by Howard Zinn, **A People's History of the United States**, p. 94] However, his libertarian credentials are damaged by him being both a President of the United States and a slave owner but compared to the other "founding fathers" of the American state, his liberalism is of a democratic form. As Chomsky reminds us, *"all the Founding Fathers hated democracy – Thomas Jefferson was a partial exception, but only partial."* The American state, as a classical liberal state, was designed (to quote James Madison) *"to protect the minority of the opulent from the majority."* Or, to repeat John Jay's principle, the *"people who own the country ought to govern it."* [**Understanding Power**, p. 315] If American is a (formally) democracy rather than an oligarchy, it is in spite of rather than because of classical liberalism.

Then there is John Stuart Mill who recognised the fundamental contradiction in classical liberalism. How can an ideology which proclaims itself for individual liberty support institutions which systematically nullify that liberty in practice? For this reason Mill attacked patriarchal marriage, arguing that marriage must be a voluntary association between equals, with *"sympathy in equality . . . living together in love, without power on one side or obedience on the other."* Rejecting the idea that there had to be *"an absolute master"* in any association, he pointed out that in *"partnership in business . . . it is not found or thought necessary to enact that in every partnership, one partner*

So to suggest that primitivism is simply a critique or some sort of *"anarchist speculation"* (to use John Moore's term) seems incredulous. If you demonise technology, organisation, "mass society" and "civilisation" as inherently authoritarian, you cannot turn round and advocate their use in a transition period or even in a free society. As such, the critique points to a mode of action and a vision of a free society and to suggest otherwise is simply incredulous. Equally, if you praise foraging bands and shifting horticultural communities of past and present as examples of anarchy then critics are entitled to conclude that primitivists desire a similar system for the future. This is reinforced by the critiques of industry, technology, "mass society" and agriculture.

Until such time as "primitivists" clearly state which of the two forms of primitivism they subscribe to, other anarchists will not take their ideas that seriously. Given that they fail to answer such basic questions of how they plan to deactivate industry safely and avoid mass starvation without the workers' control, international links and federal organisation they habitually dismiss out of hand as new forms of "governance," other anarchists do not hold much hope that it will happen soon. Ultimately, we are faced with the fact that a revolution will start in society as it is. Anarchism recognises this and suggests a means of transforming it. Primitivism shies away from such minor problems and, consequently, has little to recommend it in most anarchists' eyes.

This is not to suggest, of course, that non-primitivist anarchists think that everyone in a free society must have the same level of technology. Far from it. An anarchist society would be based on free experimentation. Different individuals and groups will pick the way of life that best suits them. Those who seek less technological ways of living will be free to do so as will those who want to apply the benefits of (appropriate) technologies. Similarly, all anarchists support the struggles of

those in the developing world against the onslaught of (capitalist) civilisation and the demands of (capitalist) progress.

For more on "primitivist" anarchism see John Zerzan's **Future Primitive** as well as David Watson's **Beyond Bookchin** and **Against the Mega-Machine**. Ken Knabb's essay **The Poverty of Primitivism** is an excellent critique of primitivism as is Brian Oliver Sheppard's **Anarchism vs. Primitivism**.

He notes how *"the law"* would *"punish"* workers' combinations *"very severely"* while ignoring the masters' combinations (*"if it dealt impartially, it would treat the masters in the same manner"*). [**The Wealth of Nations**, p. 88 and p. 129] Thus state intervention was to be opposed in general because the state was run by the few for the few, which would make state intervention benefit the few, not the many. It is doubtful Smith would have left his ideas on laissez-faire unchanged if he had lived to see the development of corporate capitalism. It is this critical edge of Smith's work are conveniently ignored by those claiming him for the classical liberal tradition.

Smith, argues Chomsky, was *"a pre-capitalist and anti-capitalist person with roots in the Enlightenment."* Yes, he argues, *"the classical liberals, the [Thomas] Jeffersons and the Smiths, were opposing the concentrations of power that they saw around them . . . They didn't see other forms of concentration of power which only developed later. When they did see them, they didn't like them. Jefferson was a good example. He was strongly opposed to the concentrations of power that he saw developing, and warned that the banking institutions and the industrial corporations which were barely coming into existence in his day would destroy the achievements of the Revolution."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 125]

As Murray Bookchin notes, Jefferson *"is most clearly identified in the early history of the United States with the political demands and interests of the independent farmer-proprietor."* [**The Third Revolution**, vol. 1, pp. 188-9] In other words, with pre-capitalist economic forms. We also find Jefferson contrasting the *"aristocrats"* and the *"democrats."* The former are *"those who fear and distrust the people, and wish to draw all powers from them into the hands of the higher classes."* The democrats *"identify with the people, have confidence in them, cherish and consider them as the honest & safe . . . depository of the public interest,"* if not always *"the most wise."* [quoted by Chomsky, **Powers and Prospects**, p. 88] As Chomsky notes, the *"aristocrats"*

Chomsky discusses this in more detail in his essay *"Language and Freedom"* (contained in both **Reason of State** and **The Chomsky Reader**). As well as Humbolt and Mill, such "pre-capitalist" liberals would include such radicals as Thomas Paine, who envisioned a society based on artisan and small farmers (i.e. a pre-capitalist economy) with a rough level of social equality and, of course, a minimal government. His ideas inspired working class radicals across the world and, as E.P. Thompson reminds us, Paine's **Rights of Man** was *"a foundation-text of the English [and Scottish] working-class movement."* While his ideas on government are *"close to a theory of anarchism,"* his reform proposals *"set a source towards the social legislation of the twentieth century."* [**The Making of the English Working Class**, p. 99, p. 101 and p. 102] His combination of concern for liberty and social justice places him close to anarchism.

Then there is Adam Smith. While the right (particularly elements of the "libertarian" right) claim him as a classic liberal, his ideas are more complex than that. For example, as Noam Chomsky points out, Smith advocated the free market because *"it would lead to perfect equality, equality of condition, not just equality of opportunity."* [**Class Warfare**, p. 124] As Smith himself put it, *"in a society where things were left to follow their natural course, where there is perfect liberty"* it would mean that *"advantages would soon return to the level of other employments"* and so *"the different employments of labour and stock must . . . be either perfectly equal or continually tending to equality."* Nor did he oppose state intervention or state aid for the working classes. For example, he advocated public education to counter the negative effects of the division of labour. Moreover, he was against state intervention because whenever *"a legislature attempts to regulate differences between masters and their workmen, its counsellors are always the masters. When regulation, therefore, is in favour of the workmen, it is always just and equitable; but it is otherwise when in favour of the masters."*

A.4 Who are the major anarchist thinkers?

Although Gerard Winstanley (**The New Law of Righteousness**, 1649) and William Godwin (**Enquiry Concerning Political Justice**, 1793) had begun to unfold the philosophy of anarchism in the 17th and 18th centuries, it was not until the second half of the 19th century that anarchism emerged as a coherent theory with a systematic, developed programme. This work was mainly started by four people – a German, ***Max Stirner*** (1806-1856), a Frenchman, ***Pierre-Joseph Proudhon*** (1809-1865), and two Russians, ***Michael Bakunin*** (1814-1876) and ***Peter Kropotkin*** (1842-1921). They took the ideas in common circulation within sections of the working population and expressed them in written form.

Born in the atmosphere of German romantic philosophy, Stirner's anarchism (set forth in **The Ego and Its Own**) was an extreme form of individualism, or **egoism**, which placed the unique individual above all else – state, property, law or duty. His ideas remain a cornerstone of anarchism. Stirner attacked both capitalism and state socialism, laying the foundations of both social and individualist anarchism by his egoist critique of capitalism and the state that supports it. In place of the state and capitalism, Max Stirner urges the *"union of egoists,"* free associations of unique individuals who co-operate as equals in order to maximise their freedom and satisfy their desires (including emotional ones for solidarity, or "intercourse" as Stirner called it). Such a union would be non-hierarchical, for, as Stirner wonders, *"is an association, wherein most members*

allow themselves to be lulled as regards their most natural and most obvious interests, actually an Egoist's association? Can they really be 'Egoists' who have banded together when one is a slave or a serf of the other?" [**No Gods, No Masters**, vol. 1, p. 24]

Individualism by definition includes no concrete programme for changing social conditions. This was attempted by Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, the first to describe himself openly as an anarchist. His theories of **mutualism**, **federalism** and workers' **self-management** and **association** had a profound effect on the growth of anarchism as a mass movement and spelled out clearly how an anarchist world could function and be co-ordinated. It would be no exaggeration to state that Proudhon's work defined the fundamental nature of anarchism as both an anti-state and anti-capitalist movement and set of ideas. Bakunin, Kropotkin and Tucker all claimed inspiration from his ideas and they are the immediate source for both social and individualist anarchism, with each thread emphasising different aspects of mutualism (for example, social anarchists stress the associational aspect of them while individualist anarchists the non-capitalist market side). Proudhon's major works include **What is Property**, **System of Economical Contradictions**, **The Principle of Federation** and, and **The Political Capacity of the Working Classes**. His most detailed discussion of what mutualism would look like can be found in his **The General Idea of the Revolution**. His ideas heavily influenced both the French Labour movement and the Paris Commune of 1871.

Proudhon's ideas were built upon by Michael Bakunin, who humbly suggested that his own ideas were simply Proudhon's *"widely developed and pushed right to . . . [their] final consequences."* [**Michael Bakunin: Selected Writings**, p. 198] However, he is doing a disservice to his own role in developing anarchism. For Bakunin is the central figure in the development of modern anarchist activism and ideas. He emphasised the importance of **collectivism,** mass

tyranny." [**Marxism, Anarchism, and Alternative Futures**, p. 777] Moreover, as Benjamin Tucker noted with regards their predecessors, while they are happy to attack any state regulation which benefits the many or limits their power, they are silent on the laws (and regulations and "rights") which benefit the few.

However there is another liberal tradition, one which is essentially pre-capitalist which has more in common with the aspirations of anarchism. As Chomsky put it:

> *"These ideas [of anarchism] grow out the Enlightenment; their roots are in Rousseau's* ***Discourse on Inequality****, Humbolt's* ***The Limits of State Action****, Kant's insistence, in his defence of the French Revolution, that freedom is the precondition for acquiring the maturity for freedom, not a gift to be granted when such maturity is achieved . . . With the development of industrial capitalism, a new and unanticipated system of injustice, it is libertarian socialism that has preserved and extended the radical humanist message of the Enlightenment and the classical liberal ideals that were perverted into an ideology to sustain the emerging social order. In fact, on the very same assumptions that led classical liberalism to oppose the intervention of the state in social life, capitalist social relations are also intolerable. This is clear, for example, from the classic work of [Wilhelm von] Humboldt,* ***The Limits of State Action****, which anticipated and perhaps inspired [John Stuart] Mill . . . This classic of liberal thought, completed in 1792, is in its essence profoundly, though prematurely, anticapitalist. Its ideas must be attenuated beyond recognition to be transmuted into an ideology of industrial capitalism."* [*"Notes on Anarchism"*, **For Reasons of State**, p. 156]

contracts. [**The Democratic Worker-Owned Firm**, p. 210] This pro-capitalist liberalism essentially boils down to the liberty to pick a master or, if you are among the lucky few, to become a master yourself. The idea that freedom means self-determination for all at all times is alien to it. Rather it is based on the idea of "self-ownership," that you "own" yourself and your rights. Consequently, you can sell (alienate) your rights and liberty on the market. As we discuss in section B.4, in practice this means that most people are subject to autocratic rule for most of their waking hours (whether in work or in marriage).

The modern equivalent of classical liberalism is the right-wing "libertarian" tradition associated with Milton Friedman, Robert Nozick, von Hayek and so forth. As they aim to reduce the state to simply the defender to private property and enforcer of the hierarchies that social institution creates, they can by no stretch of the imagination be considered near anarchism. What is called "liberalism" in, say, the United States is a more democratic liberal tradition and has, like anarchism, little in common with the shrill pro-capitalist defenders of the minimum state. While they may (sometimes) be happy to denounce the state's attacks on individual liberty, they are more than happy to defend the "freedom" of the property owner to impose exactly the same restrictions on those who use their land or capital.

Given that feudalism combined ownership and rulership, that the governance of people living on land was an attribute of the ownership of that land, it would be no exaggeration to say that the right-wing "libertarian" tradition is simply its modern (voluntary) form. It is no more libertarian than the feudal lords who combated the powers of the King in order to protect their power over their own land and serfs. As Chomsky notes, *"the 'libertarian' doctrines that are fashionable in the US and UK particularly . . . seem to me to reduce to advocacy of one or another form of illegitimate authority, quite often real*

insurrection, **revolution** and involvement in the militant **labour movement** as the means of creating a free, classless society. Moreover, he repudiated Proudhon's sexism and added patriarchy to the list of social evils anarchism opposes. Bakunin also emphasised the social nature of humanity and individuality, rejecting the abstract individualism of liberalism as a denial of freedom. His ideas become dominant in the 20th century among large sections of the radical labour movement. Indeed, many of his ideas are almost identical to what would later be called syndicalism or anarcho-syndicalism. Bakunin influenced many union movements – especially in Spain, where a major anarchist social revolution took place in 1936. His works include **Anarchy and Statism** (his only book), **God and the State**, **The Paris Commune and the Idea of the State**, and many others. **Bakunin on Anarchism**, edited by Sam Dolgoff is an excellent collection of his major writings. Brian Morris' **Bakunin: The Philosophy of Freedom** is an excellent introduction to Bakunin's life and ideas.

Peter Kropotkin, a scientist by training, fashioned a sophisticated and detailed anarchist analysis of modern conditions linked to a thorough-going prescription for a future society – **communist-anarchism** – which continues to be the most widely-held theory among anarchists. He identified **mutual aid** as the best means by which individuals can develop and grow, pointing out that competition **within** humanity (and other species) was often not in the best interests of those involved. Like Bakunin, he stressed the importance of direct, economic, class struggle and anarchist participation in any popular movement, particularly in labour unions. Taking Proudhon's and Bakunin's idea of the **commune,** he generalised their insights into a vision of how the social, economic and personal life of a free society would function. He aimed to base anarchism *"on a scientific basis by the study of the tendencies that are apparent now in society and may indicate its further evolution"* towards anarchy while, at the

same time, urging anarchists to *"promote their ideas directly amongst the labour organisations and to induce those union to a direct struggle against capital, without placing their faith in parliamentary legislation."* [**Anarchism**, p. 298 and p. 287] Like Bakunin, he was a revolutionary and, like Bakunin, his ideas inspired those struggle for freedom across the globe. His major works included **Mutual Aid**, **The Conquest of Bread**, **Field, Factories, and Workshops**, **Modern Science and Anarchism**, **Act for Yourselves**, **The State: Its Historic Role**, **Words of a Rebel**, and many others. A collection of his revolutionary pamphlets is available under the title **Anarchism** and is essential reading for anyone interested in his ideas. In Addition, Graham Purchase's **Evolution and Revolution** and **Kropotkin: The Politics of Community** by Brain Morris are both excellent evaluations of his ideas and how they are still relevant today.

The various theories proposed by these "founding anarchists" are not, however, mutually exclusive: they are interconnected in many ways, and to some extent refer to different levels of social life. Individualism relates closely to the conduct of our private lives: only by recognising the uniqueness and freedom of others and forming unions with them can we protect and maximise our own uniqueness and liberty; mutualism relates to our general relations with others: by mutually working together and co-operating we ensure that we do not work for others. Production under anarchism would be collectivist, with people working together for their own, and the common, good, and in the wider political and social world decisions would be reached communally.

It should also be stressed that anarchist schools of thought are **not** named after individual anarchists. Thus anarchists are **not** *"Bakuninists"*, *"Proudhonists"* or *"Kropotkinists"* (to name three possibilities). Anarchists, to quote Malatesta, *"follow ideas and not men, and rebel against this habit of embodying a principle in a man."* This did not stop him calling Bakunin

A.4.2 Are there any liberal thinkers close to anarchism?

As noted in the last section, there are thinkers in both the liberal and socialist traditions who approach anarchist theory and ideals. This understandable as anarchism shares certain ideas and ideals with both.

However, as will become clear in sections A.4.3 and A.4.4, anarchism shares most common ground with the socialist tradition it is a part of. This is because classical liberalism is a profoundly elitist tradition. The works of Locke and the tradition he inspired aimed to justify hierarchy, state and private property. As Carole Pateman notes, *"Locke's state of nature, with its father-rulers and capitalist economy, would certainly not find favour with anarchists"* any more than his vision of the social contract and the liberal state it creates. A state, which as Pateman recounts, in which *"only males who own substantial amounts of material property are [the] politically relevant members of society"* and exists *"precisely to preserve the property relationships of the developing capitalist market economy, not to disturb them."* For the majority, the non-propertied, they expressed *"tacit consent"* to be ruled by the few by *"choosing to remain within the one's country of birth when reaching adulthood."* [**The Problem of Political Obligation**, p. 141, p. 71, p. 78 and p. 73]

Thus anarchism is at odds with what can be called the pro-capitalist liberal tradition which, flowing from Locke, builds upon his rationales for hierarchy. As David Ellerman notes, *"there is a whole liberal tradition of apologising for non-democratic government based on consent – on a voluntary social contract alienating governing rights to a sovereign."* In economics, this is reflected in their support for wage labour and the capitalist autocracy it creates for the *"employment contract is the modern limited workplace version"* of such

While not an anarchist, she is aware that real change comes from below, by the self-activity of working class people fighting for a better world. Decentralisation of power is a key idea in the book. As she puts it, the *"goal"* of the social movements she describes is *"not to take power for themselves but to challenge power centralisation on principle"* and so creating *"a new culture of vibrant direct democracy . . . one that is fuelled and strengthened by direct participation."* She does not urge the movement to invest itself with new leaders and neither does she (like the Left) think that electing a few leaders to make decisions for us equals "democracy" (*"the goal is not better faraway rules and rulers but close-up democracy on the ground"*). Klein, therefore, gets to the heart of the matter. Real social change is based on empowering the grassroots, *"the desire for self-determination, economic sustainability and participatory democracy."* Given this, Klein has presented libertarian ideas to a wide audience. [**Op. Cit.**, p. xxvi, p. xxvi-xxvii, p. 245 and p. 233]

Other notable libertarian thinkers include Henry D. Thoreau, Albert Camus, Aldous Huxley, Lewis Mumford, Lewis Mumford and Oscar Wilde. Thus there are numerous thinkers who approach anarchist conclusions and who discuss subjects of interest to libertarians. As Kropotkin noted a hundred years ago, these kinds of writers *"are full of ideas which show how closely anarchism is interwoven with the work that is going on in modern thought in the same direction of enfranchisement of man from the bonds of the state as well as from those of capitalism."* [**Anarchism**, p. 300] The only change since then is that more names can be added to the list.

Peter Marshall discusses the ideas of most, but not all, of the non-anarchist libertarians we mention in this and subsequent sections in his book history of anarchism, **Demanding the Impossible**. Clifford Harper's **Anarchy: A Graphic Guide** is also a useful guide for finding out more.

"our great master and inspiration." [**Errico Malatesta: Life and Ideas**, p. 199 and p. 209] Equally, not everything written by a famous anarchist thinker is automatically libertarian. Bakunin, for example, only became an anarchist in the last ten years of his life (this does not stop Marxists using his pre-anarchist days to attack anarchism!). Proudhon turned away from anarchism in the 1850s before returning to a more anarchistic (if not strictly anarchist) position just before his death in 1865. Similarly, Kropotkin's or Tucker's arguments in favour of supporting the Allies during the First World War had nothing to do with anarchism. Thus to say, for example, that anarchism is flawed because Proudhon was a sexist pig simply does not convince anarchists. No one would dismiss democracy, for example, because Rousseau opinions on women were just as sexist as Proudhon's. As with anything, modern anarchists analyse the writings of previous anarchists to draw inspiration, but a dogma. Consequently, we reject the non-libertarian ideas of "famous" anarchists while keeping their positive contributions to the development of anarchist theory. We are sorry to belabour the point, but much of Marxist "criticism" of anarchism basically involves pointing out the negative aspects of dead anarchist thinkers and it is best simply to state clearly the obvious stupidity of such an approach.

Anarchist ideas of course did not stop developing when Kropotkin died. Neither are they the products of just four men. Anarchism is by its very nature an evolving theory, with many different thinkers and activists. When Bakunin and Kropotkin were alive, for example, they drew aspects of their ideas from other libertarian activists. Bakunin, for example, built upon the practical activity of the followers of Proudhon in the French labour movement in the 1860s. Kropotkin, while the most associated with developing the theory communist-anarchism, was simply the most famous expounder of the ideas that had developed after Bakunin's

death in the libertarian wing of the First International and before he became an anarchist. Thus anarchism is the product of tens of thousands of thinkers and activists across the globe, each shaping and developing anarchist theory to meet their needs as part of the general movement for social change. Of the many other anarchists who could be mentioned here, we can mention but a few.

Stirner is not the only famous anarchist to come from Germany. It also produced a number of original anarchist thinkers. Gustav Landauer was expelled from the Marxist Social-Democratic Party for his radical views and soon after identified himself as an anarchist. For him, anarchy was *"the expression of the liberation of man from the idols of state, the church and capital"* and he fought *"**State** socialism, levelling from above, bureaucracy"* in favour of *"free association and union, the absence of authority."* His ideas were a combination of Proudhon's and Kropotkin's and he saw the development of self-managed communities and co-operatives as the means of changing society. He is most famous for his insight that the *"state is a condition, a certain relationship among human beings, a mode of behaviour between them; we destroy it by contracting other relationships, by behaving differently towards one another."* [quoted by Peter Marshall, **Demanding the Impossible**, p. 410 and p. 411] He took a leading part in the Munich revolution of 1919 and was murdered during its crushing by the German state. His book **For Socialism** is an excellent summary of his main ideas.

Other notable German anarchists include Johann Most, originally a Marxist and an elected member of the Reichstag, he saw the futility of voting and became an anarchist after being exiled for writing against the Kaiser and clergy. He played an important role in the American anarchist movement, working for a time with Emma Goldman. More a propagandist than a great thinker, his revolutionary message inspired numerous people to become anarchists. Then there is Rudolf Rocker, a

and Windows, a collection of essays on globalisation, its consequences and the wave of protests against it.

Klein's articles are well written and engaging, covering the reality of modern capitalism, the gap, as she puts it, *"between rich and power but also between rhetoric and reality, between what is said and what is done. Between the promise of globalisation and its real effects."* She shows how we live in a world where the market (i.e. capital) is made "freer" while people suffer increased state power and repression. How an unelected Argentine President labels that country's popular assemblies *"antidemocratic."* How rhetoric about liberty is used as a tool to defend and increase private power (as she reminds us, *"always missing from [the globalisation] discussion is the issue of power. So many of the debates that we have about globalisation theory are actually about power: who holds it, who is exercising it and who is disguising it, pretending it no longer matters"*). [**Fences and Windows**, pp 83-4 and p. 83]

And how people across the world are resisting. As she puts it, *"many [in the movement] are tired of being spoken for and about. They are demanding a more direct form of political participation."* She reports on a movement which she is part of, one which aims for a globalisation from below, one *"founded on principles of transparency, accountability and self-determination, one that frees people instead of liberating capital."* This means being against a *"corporate-driven globalisation . . . that is centralising power and wealth into fewer and fewer hands"* while presenting an alternative which is about *"decentralising power and building community-based decision-making potential – whether through unions, neighbourhoods, farms, villages, anarchist collectives or aboriginal self-government."* All strong anarchist principles and, like anarchists, she wants people to manage their own affairs and chronicles attempts around the world to do just that (many of which, as Klein notes, are anarchists or influenced by anarchist ideas, sometimes knowing, sometimes not). [**Op. Cit.**, p. 77, p. 79 and p. 16]

and proposed a participatory democratic theory in which people collectively make their own decisions (a self-assumed obligation to your fellow citizens rather to a state). In discussing Kropotkin, she showed her awareness of the social anarchist tradition to which her own theory is obviously related.

Pateman builds on this analysis in her **The Sexual Contract**, where she dissects the sexism of classical liberal and democratic theory. She analyses the weakness of what calls 'contractarian' theory (classical liberalism and right-wing "libertarianism") and shows how it leads not to free associations of self-governing individuals but rather social relationships based on authority, hierarchy and power in which a few rule the many. Her analysis of the state, marriage and wage labour are profoundly libertarian, showing that freedom must mean more than consenting to be ruled. This is the paradox of capitalist liberal, for a person is assumed to be free in order to consent to a contract but once within it they face the reality subordination to another's decisions (see section A.4.2 for further discussion).

Her ideas challenge some of Western culture's core beliefs about individual freedom and her critiques of the major Enlightenment political philosophers are powerful and convincing. Implicit is a critique not just of the conservative and liberal tradition, but of the patriarchy and hierarchy contained within the Left as well. As well as these works, a collection of her essays is available called **The Disorder of Women**.

Within the so-called "anti-globalisation" movement Naomi Klein shows an awareness of libertarian ideas and her own work has a libertarian thrust to it (we call it "so-called" as its members are internationalists, seeking a globalisation from below not one imposed from above by and for a few). She first came to attention as the author of **No Logo**, which charts the growth of consumer capitalism, exposing the dark reality behind the glossy brands of capitalism and, more importantly, highlighting the resistance to it. No distant academic, she is an active participant in the movement she reports on in **Fences**

bookbinder by trade who played an important role in the Jewish labour movement in the East End of London (see his autobiography, **The London Years**, for details). He also produced the definite introduction to **Anarcho-syndicalism** as well as analysing the Russian Revolution in articles like **Anarchism and Sovietism** and defending the Spanish revolution in pamphlets like **The Tragedy of Spain**. His **Nationalism and Culture** is a searching analysis of human culture through the ages, with an analysis of both political thinkers and power politics. He dissects nationalism and explains how the nation is not the cause but the result of the state as well as repudiating race science for the nonsense it is.

In the United States Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman were two of the leading anarchist thinkers and activists. Goldman united Stirner's egoism with Kropotkin's communism into a passionate and powerful theory which combined the best of both. She also placed anarchism at the centre of feminist theory and activism as well as being an advocate of syndicalism (see her book **Anarchism and Other Essays** and the collection of essays, articles and talks entitled **Red Emma Speaks**). Alexander Berkman, Emma's lifelong companion, produced a classic introduction to anarchist ideas called **What is Anarchism?** (also known as **What is Communist Anarchism?** and the **ABC of Anarchism**). Like Goldman, he supported anarchist involvement in the labour movement was a prolific writer and speaker (the book **Life of An Anarchist** gives an excellent selection of his best articles, books and pamphlets). Both were involved in editing anarchist journals, with Goldman most associated with **Mother Earth** (see **Anarchy! An Anthology of Emma Goldman's Mother Earth** edited by Peter Glassgold) and Berkman **The Blast** (reprinted in full in 2005). Both journals were closed down when the two anarchists were arrested in 1917 for their anti-war activism.

In December 1919, both he and Goldman were expelled by the US government to Russia after the 1917 revolution had rad-

icalised significant parts of the American population. There as they were considered too dangerous to be allowed to remain in the land of the free. Exactly two years later, their passports arrived to allow them to leave Russia. The Bolshevik slaughter of the Kronstadt revolt in March 1921 after the civil war ended had finally convinced them that the Bolshevik dictatorship meant the death of the revolution there. The Bolshevik rulers were more than happy to see the back of two genuine revolutionaries who stayed true to their principles. Once outside Russia, Berkman wrote numerous articles on the fate of the revolution (including **The Russian Tragedy** and **The Kronstadt Rebellion**) as well as publishing his diary in book from as **The Bolshevik Myth**. Goldman produced her classic work **My Disillusionment in Russia** as well as publishing her famous autobiography **Living My Life**. She also found time to refute Trotsky's lies about the Kronstadt rebellion in **Trotsky Protests Too Much**.

As well as Berkman and Goldman, the United States also produced other notable activists and thinkers. Voltairine de Cleyre played an important role in the US anarchist movement, enriching both US and international anarchist theory with her articles, poems and speeches. Her work includes such classics as **Anarchism and American Traditions**, **Direct Action**, **Sex Slavery** and **The Dominant Idea**. These are included, along with other articles and some of her famous poems, in **The Voltairine de Cleyre Reader**. These and other important essays are included in **Exquisite Rebel**, another anthology of her writings, while Eugenia C. Delamotte's **Gates of Freedom** provides an excellent overview of her life and ideas as well as selections from her works. In addition, the book **Anarchy! An Anthology of Emma Goldman's Mother Earth** contains a good selection of her writings as well as other anarchists active at the time. Also of interest is the collection of the speeches she made to mark the state murder of the Chicago Martyrs in 1886 (see **the First Mayday:**

like anarchists, interested in producer co-operatives as alternatives to wage slavery will find his work of immense interest.

Ellerman is not the only person to stress the benefits of co-operation. Alfie Kohn's important work on the benefits of co-operation builds upon Kropotkin's studies of mutual aid and is, consequently, of interest to social anarchists. In **No Contest: the case against competition** and **Punished by Rewards**, Kohn discusses (with extensive empirical evidence) the failings and negative impact of competition on those subject to it. He addresses both economic and social issues in his works and shows that competition is not what it is cracked up to be.

Within feminist theory, Carole Pateman is the most obvious libertarian influenced thinker. Independently of Ellerman, Pateman has produced a powerful argument for self-managed association in both the workplace and society as a whole. Building upon a libertarian analysis of Rousseau's arguments, her analysis of contract theory is ground breaking. If a theme has to be ascribed to Pateman's work it could be freedom and what it means to be free. For her, freedom can only be viewed as self-determination and, consequently, the absence of subordination. Consequently, she has advocated a participatory form of democracy from her first major work, **Participation and Democratic Theory** onwards. In that book, a pioneering study of in participatory democracy, she exposed the limitations of liberal democratic theory, analysed the works of Rousseau, Mill and Cole and presented empirical evidence on the benefits of participation on the individuals involved.

In the **Problem of Political Obligation**, Pateman discusses the "liberal" arguments on freedom and finds them wanting. For the liberal, a person must consent to be ruled by another but this opens up the "problem" that they might not consent and, indeed, may never have consented. Thus the liberal state would lack a justification. She deepens her analysis to question why freedom should be equated to consenting to be ruled

anarchists are closest to the liberal tradition while social anarchists are closest to the socialist.

Indeed, as Nicholas Walter put it, *"Anarchism can be seen as a development from either liberalism or socialism, or from both liberalism and socialism. Like liberals, anarchists want freedom; like socialists, anarchists want equality."* However, *"anarchism is not just a mixture of liberalism and socialism . . . we differ fundamentally from them."* [**About Anarchism**, p. 29 and p. 31] In this he echoes Rocker's comments in **Anarcho-Syndicalism**. And this can be a useful tool for seeing the links between anarchism and other theories however it must be stressed that anarchism offers an ***anarchist*** critique of both liberalism and socialism and we should not submerge the uniqueness of anarchism into other philosophies.

Section A.4.2 discusses liberal thinkers who are close to anarchism, while section A.4.3 highlights those socialists who are close to anarchism. There are even Marxists who inject libertarian ideas into their politics and these are discussed in section A.4.4. And, of course, there are thinkers who cannot be so easily categorised and will be discussed here.

Economist David Ellerman has produced an impressive body of work arguing for workplace democracy. Explicitly linking his ideas the early British Ricardian socialists and Proudhon, in such works as **The Democratic Worker-Owned Firm** and **Property and Contract in Economics** he has presented both a rights based and labour-property based defence of self-management against capitalism. He argues that *"[t]oday's economic democrats are the **new abolitionists** trying to abolish the whole institution of renting people in favour of democratic self-management in the workplace"* for his *"critique is not new; it was developed in the Enlightenment doctrine of inalienable rights. It was applied by abolitionists against the voluntary self-enslavement contract and by political democrats against the voluntary contraction defence of non-democratic government."* [**The Democratic Worker-Owned Firm**, p. 210] Anyone,

The Haymarket Speeches 1895-1910). Every November the 11th, except when illness made it impossible, she spoke in their memory. For those interested in the ideas of that previous generation of anarchists which the Chicago Martyrs represented, Albert Parsons' **Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Scientific Basis** is essential reading. His wife, Lucy Parsons, was also an outstanding anarchist activist from the 1870s until her death in 1942 and selections of her writings and speeches can be found in the book **Freedom, Equality & Solidarity** (edited by Gale Ahrens).

Elsewhere in the Americas, Ricardo Flores Magon helped lay the ground for the Mexican revolution of 1910 by founding the (strangely named) **Mexican Liberal Party** in 1905 which organised two unsuccessful uprising against the Diaz dictatorship in 1906 and 1908. Through his paper **Tierra y Libertad** (*"Land and Liberty"*) he influenced the developing labour movement as well as Zapata's peasant army. He continually stressed the need to turn the revolution into a **social** revolution which will *"give the lands to the people"* as well as *"possession of the factories, mines, etc."* Only this would ensure that the people *"will not be deceived."* Talking of the Agrarians (the Zapatista army), Ricardo's brother Enrique he notes that they *"are more or less inclined towards anarchism"* and they can work together because both are *"direct actionists"* and *"they act perfectly revolutionary. They go after the rich, the authorities and the priestcraft"* and have *"burnt to ashes private property deeds as well as all official records"* as well as having *"thrown down the fences that marked private properties."* Thus the anarchists *"propagate our principles"* while the Zapatista's *"put them into practice."* [quoted by David Poole, **Land and Liberty**, p. 17 and p. 25] Ricardo died as a political prisoner in an American jail and is, ironically, considered a hero of the revolution by the Mexican state. A substantial collection of his writings are available in the book **Dreams of Freedom** (which includes an impressive biograph-

ical essay which discusses his influence as well as placing his work in historical context).

Italy, with its strong and dynamic anarchist movement, has produced some of the best anarchist writers. Errico Malatesta spent over 50 years fighting for anarchism across the world and his writings are amongst the best in anarchist theory. For those interested in his practical and inspiring ideas then his short pamphlet **Anarchy** cannot be beaten. Collections of his articles can be found in **The Anarchist Revolution** and **Errico Malatesta: His Life and Ideas**, both edited by Vernon Richards. A favourite writing technique was the use of dialogues, such as **At the Cafe: Conversations on Anarchism**. These, using the conversations he had with non-anarchists as their basis, explained anarchist ideas in a clear and down to Earth manner. Another dialogue, **Fra Contadini: A Dialogue on Anarchy**, was translated into many languages, with 100,000 copies printed in Italy in 1920 when the revolution Malatesta had fought for all his life looked likely. At this time Malatesta edited **Umanita Nova** (the first Italian daily anarchist paper, it soon gained a circulation of 50 000) as well as writing the programme for the **Unione Anarchica Italiana**, a national anarchist organisation of some 20 000. For his activities during the factory occupations he was arrested at the age of 67 along with 80 other anarchists activists. Other Italian anarchists of note include Malatesta's friend Luigi Fabbri (sadly little of his work has been translated into English bar **Bourgeois Influences on Anarchism** and **Anarchy and 'Scientific' Communism**) Luigi Galleani produced a very powerful anti-organisational anarchist-communism which proclaimed (in **The End of Anarchism?**) that *"Communism is simply the economic foundation by which the individual has the opportunity to regulate himself and carry out his functions."* Camillo Berneri, before being murdered by the Communists during the Spanish Revolution, continued the fine tradition of critical, practical anarchism associated with Italian anarchism.

chist press as well as writing two well known short introductions to anarchism (**Anarchism: Arguments for and against** and **About Anarchism**, respectively).

We could go on; there are many more writers we could mention. But besides these, there are the thousands of "ordinary" anarchist militants who have never written books but whose common sense and activism have encouraged the spirit of revolt within society and helped build the new world in the shell of the old. As Kropotkin put it, *"anarchism was born **among the people**; and it will continue to be full of life and creative power only as long as it remains a thing of the people."* [**Anarchism**, p. 146]

So we hope that this concentration on anarchist thinkers should not be taken to mean that there is some sort of division between activists and intellectuals in the movement. Far from it. Few anarchists are purely thinkers or activists. They are usually both. Kropotkin, for example, was jailed for his activism, as was Malatesta and Goldman. Makhno, most famous as an active participate in the Russian Revolution, also contributed theoretical articles to the anarchist press during and after it. The same can be said of Louise Michel, whose militant activities during the Paris Commune and in building the anarchist movement in France after it did not preclude her writing articles for the libertarian press. We are simply indicating key anarchists thinkers so that those interested can read about their ideas directly.

A.4.1 Are there any thinkers close to anarchism?

Yes. There are numerous thinkers who are close to anarchism. They come from both the liberal and socialist traditions. While this may be considered surprising, it is not. Anarchism has links with both ideologies. Obviously the individualist

anarchism, he contributed regularly to the anarchist press (see the collection of articles **A One-Man Manifesto and other writings from Freedom Press**). Another pacifist anarchist was Alex Comfort. As well as writing the **Joy of Sex**, Comfort was an active pacifist and anarchist. He wrote particularly on pacifism, psychiatry and sexual politics from a libertarian perspective. His most famous anarchist book was **Authority and Delinquency** and a collection of his anarchist pamphlets and articles was published under the title **Writings against Power and Death**.

However, the most famous and influential British anarchist must be Colin Ward. He became an anarchist when stationed in Glasgow during the Second World War and came across the local anarchist group there. Once an anarchist, he has contributed to the anarchist press extensively. As well as being an editor of **Freedom**, he also edited the influential monthly magazine **Anarchy** during the 1960s (a selection of articles picked by Ward can be found in the book **A Decade of Anarchy**). However, his most famous single book is **Anarchy in Action** where he has updated Kropotkin's **Mutual Aid** by uncovering and documenting the anarchistic nature of everyday life even within capitalism. His extensive writing on housing has emphasised the importance of collective self-help and social management of housing against the twin evils of privatisation and nationalisation (see, for example, his books **Talking Houses** and **Housing: An Anarchist Approach**). He has cast an anarchist eye on numerous other issues, including water use (Reflected in Water: A Crisis of Social Responsibility), transport (**Freedom to go: after the motor age**) and the welfare state (**Social Policy: an anarchist response**). His **Anarchism: A Very Short Introduction** is a good starting point for discovering anarchism and his particular perspective on it while **Talking Anarchy** provides an excellent overview of both his ideas and life. Lastly we must mention both Albert Meltzer and Nicolas Walter, both of whom contributed extensively to the anar-

His study of Kropotkin's federalist ideas is a classic (**Peter Kropotkin: His Federalist Ideas**). His daughter Marie-Louise Berneri, before her tragic early death, contributed to the British anarchist press (see her **Neither East Nor West: Selected Writings 1939-48** and **Journey Through Utopia**).

In Japan, Hatta Shuzo developed Kropotkin's communist-anarchism in new directions between the world wars. Called "true anarchism," he created an anarchism which was a concrete alternative to the mainly peasant country he and thousands of his comrades were active in. While rejecting certain aspects of syndicalism, they organised workers into unions as well as working with the peasantry for the *"foundation stones on which to build the new society that we long for are none other than the awakening of the tenant farmers"* who *"account for a majority of the population."* Their new society was based on decentralised communes which combined industry and agriculture for, as one of Hatta's comrade's put it, *"the village will cease to be a mere communist agricultural village and become a co-operative society which is a fusion of agriculture and industry."* Hatta rejected the idea that they sought to go back to an ideal past, stating that the anarchists were *"completely opposite to the medievalists. We seek to use machines as means of production and, indeed, hope for the invention of yet more ingenious machines."* [quoted by John Crump, **Hatta Shuzo and Pure Anarchism in Interwar Japan**, p. 122-3, and p. 144]

As far as individualist anarchism goes, the undoubted "pope" was Benjamin Tucker. Tucker, in his **Instead of Book**, used his intellect and wit to attack all who he considered enemies of freedom (mostly capitalists, but also a few social anarchists as well! For example, Tucker excommunicated Kropotkin and the other communist-anarchists from anarchism. Kropotkin did not return the favour). Tucker built on the such notable thinkers as Josiah Warren, Lysander Spooner, Stephen Pearl Andrews and William B. Greene, adapting Proudhon's mutu-

alism to the conditions of pre-capitalist America (see Rudolf Rocker's **Pioneers of American Freedom** for details). Defending the worker, artisan and small-scale farmer from a state intent on building capitalism by means of state intervention, Tucker argued that capitalist exploitation would be abolished by creating a totally free non-capitalist market in which the four state monopolies used to create capitalism would be struck down by means of mutual banking and *"occupancy and use"* land and resource rights. Placing himself firmly in the socialist camp, he recognised (like Proudhon) that all non-labour income was theft and so opposed profit, rent and interest. he translated Proudhon's **What is Property** and **System of Economical Contradictions** as well as Bakunin's **God and the State**. Tucker's compatriot, Joseph Labadie was an active trade unionist as well as contributor to Tucker's paper **Liberty**. His son, Lawrence Labadie carried the individualist-anarchist torch after Tucker's death, believing that *"that freedom in every walk of life is the greatest possible means of elevating the human race to happier conditions."*

Undoubtedly the Russian Leo Tolstoy is the most famous writer associated with religious anarchism and has had the greatest impact in spreading the spiritual and pacifistic ideas associated with that tendency. Influencing such notable people as Gandhi and the ***Catholic Worker Group*** around Dorothy Day, Tolstoy presented a radical interpretation of Christianity which stressed individual responsibility and freedom above the mindless authoritarianism and hierarchy which marks so much of mainstream Christianity. Tolstoy's works, like those of that other radical libertarian Christian William Blake, have inspired many Christians towards a libertarian vision of Jesus' message which has been hidden by the mainstream churches. Thus Christian Anarchism maintains, along with Tolstoy, that *"Christianity in its true sense puts an end to government"* (see, for example, Tolstoy's **The Kingdom of God is within you** and Peter Marshall's **William Blake: Visionary Anarchist**).

More recently, Noam Chomsky (in such works as **Deterring Democracy**, **Necessary Illusions**, **World Orders, Old and New**, **Rogue States**, **Hegemony or Survival** and many others) and Murray Bookchin (**Post-Scarcity Anarchism**, **The Ecology of Freedom**, **Towards an Ecological Society**, and **Remaking Society**, among others) have kept the social anarchist movement at the front of political theory and analysis. Bookchin's work has placed anarchism at the centre of green thought and has been a constant threat to those wishing to mystify or corrupt the movement to create an ecological society. **The Murray Bookchin Reader** contains a representative selection of his writings. Sadly, a few years before his death Bookchin distanced himself from the anarchism he spent nearly four decades advocating (although he remained a libertarian socialist to the end). Chomsky's well documented critiques of U.S. imperialism and how the media operates are his most famous works, but he has also written extensively about the anarchist tradition and its ideas, most famously in his essays *"Notes on Anarchism"* (in **For Reasons of State**) and his defence of the anarchist social revolution against bourgeois historians in *"Objectivity and Liberal Scholarship"* (in **American Power and the New Mandarins**). These and others of his more explicitly anarchist essays and interviews can be found in the collection **Chomsky on Anarchism**. Other good sources for his anarchist ideas are **Radical Priorities**, **Language and Politics** and the pamphlet **Government in the Future**. Both **Understanding Power** and **The Chomsky Reader** are excellent introductions to his thought.

Britain has also seen an important series of anarchist thinkers. Hebert Read (probably the only anarchist to ever accept a knighthood!) wrote several works on anarchist philosophy and theory (see his **Anarchy and Order** compilation of essays). His anarchism flowered directly from his aesthetic concerns and he was a committed pacifist. As well as giving fresh insight and expression to the tradition themes of

of the workers themselves, *grouped . . . in their own class organisations . . . on the basis of concrete action and self-government,* ***helped but not governed,*** *by revolutionaries working in the very midst of, and not above the mass and the professional, technical, defence and other branches."* [Voline, **Op. Cit.**, p. 197] By substituting party power for workers power, the Russian Revolution had made its first fatal step. Little wonder that the following prediction (from November 1917) made by anarchists in Russia came true:

> *"Once their power is consolidated and 'legalised', the Bolsheviks who are . . . men of centralist and authoritarian action will begin to rearrange the life of the country and of the people by governmental and dictatorial methods, imposed by the centre. The[y] . . . will dictate the will of the party to all Russia, and command the whole nation.* ***Your Soviets and your other local organisations will become little by little, simply executive organs of the will of the central government.*** *In the place of healthy, constructive work by the labouring masses, in place of free unification from the bottom, we will see the installation of an authoritarian and statist apparatus which would act from above and set about wiping out everything that stood in its way with an iron hand."* [quoted by Voline, **Op. Cit.**, p. 235]

The so-called "workers' state" could not be participatory or empowering for working class people (as the Marxists claimed) simply because state structures are not designed for that. Created as instruments of minority rule, they cannot be transformed into (nor "new" ones created which are) a means of liberation for the working classes. As Kropotkin put it, Anarchists *"maintain that the State organisation, having been the force to which minorities resorted for establishing and*

communist ideas with surrealism and other forms of radical art to produce an impressive critique of post-war capitalism. Unlike Castoriadis, whose ideas influenced them, the Situationists continued to view themselves as Marxists, developing Marx's critique of capitalist economy into a critique of capitalist society as alienation had shifted from being located in capitalist production into everyday life. They coined the expression ***"The Spectacle"*** to describe a social system in which people become alienated from their own lives and played the role of an audience, of spectators. Thus capitalism had turned being into having and now, with the spectacle, it turned having into appearing. They argued that we could not wait for a distant revolution, but rather should liberate ourselves in the here and now, creating events (*"situations"*) which would disrupt the ordinary and normal to jolt people out of their allotted roles within society. A social revolution based on sovereign rank and file assemblies and self-managed councils would be the ultimate "situation" and the aim of all Situationists.

While critical of anarchism, the differences between the two theories are relatively minor and the impact of the Situationists on anarchism cannot be underestimated. Many anarchists embraced their critique of modern capitalist society, their subversion of modern art and culture for revolutionary purposes and call for revolutionising everyday life. Ironically, while Situationism viewed itself as an attempt to transcend tradition forms of Marxism and anarchism, it essentially became subsumed by anarchism. The classic works of situationism are Guy Debord's **Society of the Spectacle** and Raoul Veneigem's **The Revolution of Everyday Life**. The **Situationist International Anthology** (edited by Ken Knabb) is essential reading for any budding Situationists, as is Knabb's own **Public Secrets**.

Lastly there is Autonomist Marxism. Drawing on the works of the council communism, Castoriadis, situationism and others, it places the class struggle at the heart of its analysis

of capitalism. It initially developed in Italy during the 1960s and has many currents, some closer to anarchism than others. While the most famous thinker in the Autonomist tradition is probably Antonio Negri (who coined the wonderful phrase *"money has only one face, that of the boss"* in **Marx Beyond Marx**) his ideas are more within traditional Marxist. For an Autonomist whose ideas are closer to anarchism, we need to turn to the US thinker and activist who has written the one of the best summaries of Kropotkin's ideas in which he usefully indicates the similarities between anarcho-communism and Autonomist Marxism (*"Kropotkin, Self-valorisation and the Crisis of Marxism,"* **Anarchist Studies**, vol. 2, no. 3). His book **Reading Capital Politically** is an essential text for understanding Autonomism and its history.

For Cleaver, *"autonomist Marxism"* as generic name for a variety of movements, politics and thinkers who have emphasised the autonomous power of workers – autonomous from capital, obviously, but also from their official organisations (e.g. the trade unions, the political parties) and, moreover, the power of particular groups of working class people to act autonomously from other groups (e.g. women from men). By *"autonomy"* it is meant the ability of working class people to define their own interests and to struggle for them and, critically, to go beyond mere reaction to exploitation and to take the offensive in ways that shape the class struggle and define the future. Thus they place working class power at the centre of their thinking about capitalism, how it develops and its dynamics as well as in the class conflicts within it. This is not limited to just the workplace and just as workers resist the imposition of work inside the factory or office, via slowdowns, strikes and sabotage, so too do the non-waged resist the reduction of their lives to work. For Autonomists, the creation of communism is not something that comes later but is something which is repeatedly created by current developments of new forms of working class self-activity.

a privileged class and cut off from the people. As any constituted body would do, it will instinctively seek to extend its powers, to be beyond public control, to impose its own policies and to give priority to its special interests. Having been put in a privileged position, the government is already at odds with the people whose strength it disposes of." [**Anarchy**, p. 34] A highly centralised state such as the Bolsheviks built would reduce accountability to a minimum while at the same time accelerating the isolation of the rulers from the ruled. The masses were no longer a source of inspiration and power, but rather an alien group whose lack of "discipline" (i.e. ability to follow orders) placed the revolution in danger. As one Russian Anarchist argued:

> *"The proletariat is being gradually enserfed by the state. The people are being transformed into servants over whom there has arisen a new class of administrators – a new class born mainly form the womb of the so-called intelligentsia . . . We do not mean to say . . . that the Bolshevik party set out to create a new class system. But we do say that even the best intentions and aspirations must inevitably be smashed against the evils inherent in any system of centralised power. The separation of management from labour, the division between administrators and workers flows logically from centralisation. It cannot be otherwise."* [**The Anarchists in the Russian Revolution**, pp. 123-4]

For this reason anarchists, while agreeing that there is an uneven development of political ideas within the working class, reject the idea that "revolutionaries" should take power on behalf of working people. Only when working people actually run society themselves will a revolution be successful. For anarchists, this meant that *"[e]ffective emancipation can be achieved only by the* ***direct, widespread, and independent action . . .***

state is the delegation of **power** – as such, it means that the idea of a "workers' state" expressing "workers' power" is a logical impossibility. If workers **are** running society then power rests in their hands. If a state exists then power rests in the hands of the handful of people at the top, **not** in the hands of all. The state was designed for minority rule. No state can be an organ of working class (i.e. majority) self-management due to its basic nature, structure and design. For this reason anarchists have argued for a bottom-up federation of workers' councils as the agent of revolution and the means of managing society after capitalism and the state have been abolished.

As we discuss in section H, the degeneration of the Bolsheviks from a popular working class party into dictators over the working class did not occur by accident. A combination of political ideas and the realities of state power (and the social relationships it generates) could not help but result in such a degeneration. The political ideas of Bolshevism, with its vanguardism, fear of spontaneity and identification of party power with working class power inevitably meant that the party would clash with those whom it claimed to represent. After all, if the party is the vanguard then, automatically, everyone else is a "backward" element. This meant that if the working class resisted Bolshevik policies or rejected them in soviet elections, then the working class was "wavering" and being influenced by "petty-bourgeois" and "backward" elements. Vanguardism breeds elitism and, when combined with state power, dictatorship.

State power, as anarchists have always stressed, means the delegation of power into the hands of a few. This automatically produces a class division in society – those with power and those without. As such, once in power the Bolsheviks were isolated from the working class. The Russian Revolution confirmed Malatesta's argument that a *"government, that is a group of people entrusted with making laws and empowered to use the collective power to oblige each individual to obey them, is already*

The similarities with social anarchism are obvious. Which probably explains why Autonomists spend so much time analysing and quoting Marx to justify their ideas for otherwise other Marxists will follow Lenin's lead on the council communists and label them anarchists and ignore them! For anarchists, all this Marx quoting seems amusing. Ultimately, if Marx really was an Autonomist Marxist then why do Autonomists have to spend so much time re-constructing what Marx "really" meant? Why did he not just say it clearly to begin with? Similarly, why root out (sometimes obscure) quotes and (sometimes passing) comments from Marx to justify your insights? Does something stop being true if Marx did not mention it first? Whatever the insights of Autonomism its Marxism will drag it backwards by rooting its politics in the texts of two long dead Germans. Like the surreal debate between Trotsky and Stalin in the 1920s over *"Socialism in One Country"* conducted by means of Lenin quotes, all that will be proved is not whether a given idea is right but simply that the mutually agreed authority figure (Lenin or Marx) may have held it. Thus anarchists suggest that Autonomists practice some autonomy when it comes to Marx and Engels.

Other libertarian Marxists close to anarchism include Erich Fromm and Wilhelm Reich. Both tried to combine Marx with Freud to produce a radical analysis of capitalism and the personality disorders it causes. Erich Fromm, in such books as **The Fear of Freedom**, **Man for Himself**, **The Sane Society** and **To Have or To Be?** developed a powerful and insightful analysis of capitalism which discussed how it shaped the individual and built psychological barriers to freedom and authentic living. His works discuss many important topics, including ethics, the authoritarian personality (what causes it and how to change it), alienation, freedom, individualism and what a good society would be like.

Fromm's analysis of capitalism and the *"having"* mode of life are incredibly insightful, especially in context with today's con-

sumerism. For Fromm, the way we live, work and organise together influence how we develop, our health (mental and physical), our happiness more than we suspect. He questions the sanity of a society which covets property over humanity and adheres to theories of submission and domination rather than self-determination and self-actualisation. His scathing indictment of modern capitalism shows that it is the main source of the isolation and alienation prevalent in today. Alienation, for Fromm, is at the heart of the system (whether private or state capitalism). We are happy to the extent that we realise ourselves and for this to occur our society must value the human over the inanimate (property).

Fromm rooted his ideas in a humanistic interpretation of Marx, rejecting Leninism and Stalinism as an authoritarian corruption of his ideas (*"the destruction of socialism . . . began with Lenin."*). Moreover, he stressed the need for a decentralised and libertarian form of socialism, arguing that the anarchists had been right to question Marx's preferences for states and centralisation. As he put it, the *"errors of Marx and Engels . . . [and] their centralistic orientation, were due to the fact they were much more rooted in the middle-class tradition of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, both psychologically and intellectually, than men like Fourier, Owen, Proudhon and Kropotkin."* As the *"contradiction"* in Marx between *"the principles of centralisation and decentralisation,"* for Fromm *"Marx and Engels were much more 'bourgeois' thinkers than were men like Proudhon, Bakunin, Kropotkin and Landauer. Paradoxical as it sounds, the Leninist development of Socialism represented a regression to the bourgeois concepts of the state and of political power, rather than the new socialist concept as it was expressed so much clearer by Owen, Proudhon and others."* [**The Sane Society**, p. 265, p. 267 and p. 259] Fromm's Marxism, therefore, was fundamentally of a libertarian and humanist type and his insights of profound importance for anyone interested in changing society for the better.

between the rhetoric of Bolshevism (as expressed, for example, in Lenin's **State and Revolution**) with its reality. Bolshevism in power had proved Bakunin's prediction that the *"dictatorship of the proletariat"* would become the *"dictatorship **over** the proletariat"* by the leaders of the Communist Party.

The influence of the anarchists started to grow. As Jacques Sadoul (a French officer) noted in early 1918:

> *"The anarchist party is the most active, the most militant of the opposition groups and probably the most popular . . . The Bolsheviks are anxious."* [quoted by Daniel Guerin, **Anarchism**, pp. 95-6]

By April 1918, the Bolsheviks began the physical suppression of their anarchist rivals. On April 12th, 1918, the Cheka (the secret police formed by Lenin in December, 1917) attacked anarchist centres in Moscow. Those in other cities were attacked soon after. As well as repressing their most vocal opponents on the left, the Bolsheviks were restricting the freedom of the masses they claimed to be protecting. Democratic soviets, free speech, opposition political parties and groups, self-management in the workplace and on the land – all were destroyed in the name of "socialism." All this happened, we must stress, **before** the start of the Civil War in late May, 1918, which most supporters of Leninism blame for the Bolsheviks' authoritarianism. During the civil war, this process accelerated, with the Bolsheviks' systematically repressing opposition from all quarters – including the strikes and protests of the very class who they claimed was exercising its "dictatorship" while they were in power!

It is important to stress that this process had started well **before** the start of the civil war, confirming anarchist theory that a "workers' state" is a contraction in terms. For anarchists, the Bolshevik substitution of party power for workers power (and the conflict between the two) did not come as a surprise. The

viet" in name only. Indeed, from 1919 onwards Lenin, Trotsky and other leading Bolsheviks were admitting that they had created a party dictatorship and, moreover, that such a dictatorship was essential for any revolution (Trotsky supported party dictatorship even after the rise of Stalinism).

The Red Army, moreover, no longer was a democratic organisation. In March of 1918 Trotsky had abolished the election of officers and soldier committees:

> *"the principle of election is politically purposeless and technically inexpedient, and it has been, in practice, abolished by decree."* [**Work, Discipline, Order**]

As Maurice Brinton correctly summarises:

> *"Trotsky, appointed Commissar of Military Affairs after Brest-Litovsk, had rapidly been reorganising the Red Army. The death penalty for disobedience under fire had been restored. So, more gradually, had saluting, special forms of address, separate living quarters and other privileges for officers. Democratic forms of organisation, including the election of officers, had been quickly dispensed with."* [*"The Bolsheviks and Workers' Control"*, **For Workers' Power**, pp. 336-7]

Unsurprisingly, Samuel Farber notes that *"there is no evidence indicating that Lenin or any of the mainstream Bolshevik leaders lamented the loss of workers' control or of democracy in the soviets, or at least referred to these losses as a retreat, as Lenin declared with the replacement of War Communism by NEP in 1921."* [**Before Stalinism**, p. 44]

Thus after the October Revolution, anarchists started to denounce the Bolshevik regime and call for a ***"Third Revolution"*** which would finally free the masses from all bosses (capitalist or socialist). They exposed the fundamental difference

Wilheim Reich, like Fromm, set out to elaborate a social psychology based on both Marxism and psychoanalysis. For Reich, sexual repression led to people amenable to authoritarianism and happy to subject themselves to authoritarian regimes. While he famously analysed Nazism in this way (in **The Mass Psychology of Fascism**, his insights also apply to other societies and movements (it is no co-incidence, for example, that the religious right in America oppose pre-martial sex and use scare tactics to get teenagers to associate it with disease, dirt and guilt).

His argument is that due to sexual repression we develop what he called *"character armour"* which internalises our oppressions and ensures that we can function in a hierarchical society. This social conditioning is produced by the patriarchal family and its net results is a powerful reinforcement and perpetuation of the dominant ideology and the mass production of individuals with obedience built into them, individuals ready to accept the authority of teacher, priest, employer and politician as well as to endorse the prevailing social structure. This explains how individuals and groups can support movements and institutions which exploit or oppress them. In other words, act think, feel and act against themselves and, moreover, can internalise their own oppression to such a degree that they may even seek to defend their subordinate position.

Thus, for Reich, sexual repression produces an individual who is adjusted to the authoritarian order and who will submit to it in spite of all misery and degradation it causes them. The net result is fear of freedom, and a conservative, reactionary mentality. Sexual repression aids political power, not only through the process which makes the mass individual passive and unpolitical, but also by creating in their character structure an interest in actively supporting the authoritarian order.

While his uni-dimensional focus on sex is misplaced, his analysis of how we internalise our oppression in order to sur-

vive under hierarchy is important for understanding why so many of the most oppressed people seem to love their social position and those who rule over them. By understanding this collective character structure and how it forms also provides humanity with new means of transcending such obstacles to social change. Only an awareness of how people's character structure prevents them from becoming aware of their real interests can it be combated and social self-emancipation assured.

Maurice Brinton's **The Irrational in Politics** is an excellent short introduction to Reich's ideas which links their insights to libertarian socialism.

ber notes, the anarchists *"had actually been an unnamed coalition partner of the Bolsheviks in the October Revolution."* [**Before Stalinism**, p. 126]). However, this support quickly "withered away" as the Bolsheviks showed that they were, in fact, not seeking true socialism but were instead securing power for themselves and pushing not for collective ownership of land and productive resources but for government ownership. The Bolsheviks, as noted, systematically undermined the workers' control/self-management movement in favour of capitalist-like forms of workplace management based around *"one-man management"* armed with *"dictatorial powers."*

As regards the soviets, the Bolsheviks systematically undermining what limited independence and democracy they had. In response to the *"great Bolshevik losses in the soviet elections"* during the spring and summer of 1918 *"Bolshevik armed force usually overthrew the results of these provincial elections."* Also, the *"government continually postponed the new general elections to the Petrograd Soviet, the term of which had ended in March 1918. Apparently, the government feared that the opposition parties would show gains."* [Samuel Farber, **Op. Cit.**, p. 24 and p. 22] In the Petrograd elections, the Bolsheviks *"lost the absolute majority in the soviet they had previously enjoyed"* but remained the largest party. However, the results of the Petrograd soviet elections were irrelevant as a *"Bolshevik victory was assured by the numerically quite significant representation now given to trade unions, district soviets, factory-shop committees, district workers conferences, and Red Army and naval units, in which the Bolsheviks had overwhelming strength."* [Alexander Rabinowitch, *"The Evolution of Local Soviets in Petrograd"*, pp. 20-37, **Slavic Review**, Vol. 36, No. 1, p. 36f] In other words, the Bolsheviks had undermined the democratic nature of the soviet by swamping it by their own delegates. Faced with rejection in the soviets, the Bolsheviks showed that for them "soviet power" equalled party power. To stay in power, the Bolsheviks had to destroy the soviets, which they did. The soviet system remained "so-

*point the party leadership overruled them. The result was to vest both managerial **and** control powers in organs of the state which were subordinate to the central authorities, and formed by them."* [Thomas F. Remington, **Building Socialism in Bolshevik Russia**, p. 38] This process ultimately resulted in Lenin arguing for, and introducing, *"one-man management"* armed with *"dictatorial"* power (with the manager appointed from above by the state) in April 1918. This process is documented in Maurice Brinton's **The Bolsheviks and Workers' Control**, which also indicates the clear links between Bolshevik practice and Bolshevik ideology as well as how both differed from popular activity and ideas.

Hence the comments by Russian Anarchist Peter Arshinov:

> *"Another no less important peculiarity is that [the] October [revolution of 1917] has two meanings – that which the working' masses who participated in the social revolution gave it, and with them the Anarchist-Communists, and that which was given it by the political party [the Marxist-Communists] that captured power from this aspiration to social revolution, and which betrayed and stifled all further development. An enormous gulf exists between these two interpretations of October. The October of the workers and peasants is the suppression of the power of the parasite classes in the name of equality and self-management. The Bolshevik October is the conquest of power by the party of the revolutionary intelligentsia, the installation of its 'State Socialism' and of its 'socialist' methods of governing the masses."* [**The Two Octobers**]

Initially, anarchists had supported the Bolsheviks, since the Bolshevik leaders had hidden their state-building ideology behind support for the soviets (as socialist historian Samuel Far-

A.5 What are some examples of "Anarchy in Action"?

Anarchism, more than anything else, is about the efforts of millions of revolutionaries changing the world in the last two centuries. Here we will discuss some of the high points of this movement, all of them of a profoundly anti-capitalist nature.

Anarchism **is** about radically changing the world, not just making the present system less inhuman by encouraging the anarchistic tendencies within it to grow and develop. While no purely anarchist revolution has taken place yet, there have been numerous ones with a highly anarchist character and level of participation. And while these have **all** been destroyed, in each case it has been at the hands of outside force brought against them (backed either by Communists or Capitalists), not because of any internal problems in anarchism itself. These revolutions, despite their failure to survive in the face of overwhelming force, have been both an inspiration for anarchists and proof that anarchism is a viable social theory and can be practised on a large scale.

What these revolutions share is the fact they are, to use Proudhon's term, a ***"revolution from below"*** – they were examples of *"collective activity, of popular spontaneity."* It is only a transformation of society from the bottom up by the action of the oppressed themselves that can create a free society. As Proudhon asked, *"[w]hat serious and lasting Revolution was not made **from below,** by the people?"* For this reason an anarchist is a *"revolutionary **from below.**"* Thus the social revolutions and mass movements we discuss in this section are examples

of popular self-activity and self-liberation (as Proudhon put it in 1848, *"the proletariat must emancipate itself"*). [quoted by George Woodcock, **Pierre-Joseph Proudhon: A Biography**, p. 143 and p. 125] All anarchists echo Proudhon's idea of revolutionary change from below, the creation of a new society by the actions of the oppressed themselves. Bakunin, for example, argued that anarchists are *"foes . . . of all State organisations as such, and believe that the people can only be happy and free, when, organised from below by means of its own autonomous and completely free associations, without the supervision of any guardians, it will create its own life."* [**Marxism, Freedom and the State**, p. 63] In section J.7 we discuss what anarchists think a social revolution is and what it involves.

Many of these revolutions and revolutionary movements are relatively unknown to non-anarchists. Most people will have heard of the Russian revolution but few will know of the popular movements which were its life-blood before the Bolsheviks seized power or the role that the anarchists played in it. Few will have heard of the Paris Commune, the Italian factory occupations or the Spanish collectives. This is unsurprising for, as Hebert Read notes, history *"is of two kinds – a record of events that take place publicly, that make the headlines in the newspapers and get embodied in official records – we might call this overground history"* but *"taking place at the same time, preparing for these public events, anticipating them, is another kind of history, that is not embodied in official records, an invisible underground history."* [quoted by William R. McKercher, **Freedom and Authority**, p. 155] Almost by definition, popular movements and revolts are part of *"underground history"*, the social history which gets ignored in favour of elite history, the accounts of the kings, queens, politicians and wealthy whose fame is the product of the crushing of the many.

This means our examples of "anarchy in action" are part of what the Russian anarchist Voline called *"The Unknown Revolution."* Voline used that expression as the title of his classic

'power' really should belong to the soviets, it could not belong to the Bolshevik party, and if it should belong to that Party, as the Bolsheviks envisaged, it could not belong to the soviets." [Voline, **Op. Cit.**, p. 213] Reducing the soviets to simply executing the decrees of the central (Bolshevik) government and having their All-Russian Congress be able to recall the government (i.e. those with **real** power) does not equal "all power," quite the reverse.

Similarly with the term *"workers' control of production."* Before the October Revolution Lenin saw *"workers' control"* purely in terms of the *"universal, all-embracing workers' control over the capitalists."* [**Will the Bolsheviks Maintain Power?**, p. 52] He did not see it in terms of workers' management of production itself (i.e. the abolition of wage labour) via federations of factory committees. Anarchists and the workers' factory committees did. As S.A. Smith correctly notes, Lenin used *"the term ['workers' control'] in a very different sense from that of the factory committees."* In fact Lenin's *"proposals . . . [were] thoroughly statist and centralist in character, whereas the practice of the factory committees was essentially local and autonomous."* [**Red Petrograd**, p. 154] For anarchists, *"if the workers' organisations were capable of exercising effective control [over their bosses], then they also were capable of guaranteeing all production. In such an event, private industry could be eliminated quickly but progressively, and replaced by collective industry. Consequently, the Anarchists rejected the vague nebulous slogan of 'control of production.' They advocated* ***expropriation – progressive, but immediate – of private industry by the organisations of collective production.****"* [Voline, **Op. Cit.**, p. 221]

Once in power, the Bolsheviks systematically undermined the popular meaning of workers' control and replaced it with their own, statist conception. *"On three occasions,"* one historian notes, *"in the first months of Soviet power, the [factory] committee leaders sought to bring their model into being. At each*

> *Communists and the Bolsheviks competed for the support of the same uneducated, depressed, and dissatisfied elements of the population, and the fact is that in the summer of 1917, the Anarchist-Communists, with the support they enjoyed in a few important factories and regiments, possessed an undeniable capacity to influence the course of events. Indeed, the Anarchist appeal was great enough in some factories and military units to influence the actions of the Bolsheviks themselves."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 64]

Indeed, one leading Bolshevik stated in June, 1917 (in response to a rise in anarchist influence), *"[b]y fencing ourselves off from the Anarchists, we may fence ourselves off from the masses."* [quoted by Alexander Rabinowitch, **Op. Cit.**, p. 102]

The anarchists operated with the Bolsheviks during the October Revolution which overthrew the provisional government. But things changed once the authoritarian socialists of the Bolshevik party had seized power. While both anarchists and Bolsheviks used many of the same slogans, there were important differences between the two. As Voline argued, *"[f]rom the lips and pens of the Anarchists, those slogans were sincere and concrete, for they corresponded to their principles and called for action entirely in conformity with such principles. But with the Bolsheviks, the same slogans meant practical solutions totally different from those of the libertarians and did not tally with the ideas which the slogans appeared to express."* [**The Unknown Revolution**, p. 210]

Take, for example, the slogan *"All power to the Soviets."* For anarchists it meant exactly that – organs for the working class to run society directly, based on mandated, recallable delegates. For the Bolsheviks, that slogan was simply the means for a Bolshevik government to be formed over and above the soviets. The difference is important, *"for the Anarchists declared, if*

account of the Russian revolution he was an active participant of. He used it to refer to the rarely acknowledged independent, creative actions of the people themselves. As Voline put it, *"it is not known how to study a revolution"* and most historians *"mistrust and ignore those developments which occur silently in the depths of the revolution . . . at best, they accord them a few words in passing . . . [Yet] it is precisely these hidden facts which are important, and which throw a true light on the events under consideration and on the period."* [**The Unknown Revolution**, p. 19] Anarchism, based as it is on revolution from below, has contributed considerably to both the ***"underground history"*** and the ***"unknown revolution"*** of the past few centuries and this section of the FAQ will shed some light on its achievements.

It is important to point out that these examples are of wide-scale social experiments and do not imply that we ignore the undercurrent of anarchist practice which exists in everyday life, even under capitalism. Both Peter Kropotkin (in **Mutual Aid**) and Colin Ward (in **Anarchy in Action**) have documented the many ways in which ordinary people, usually unaware of anarchism, have worked together as equals to meet their common interests. As Colin Ward argues, *"an anarchist society, a 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."* [**Anarchy in Action**, p. 14]

Anarchism is not only about a future society, it is also about the social struggle happening today. It is not a condition but a process, which we create by our self-activity and self-liberation.

By the 1960's, however, many commentators were writing off the anarchist movement as a thing of the past. Not only had fascism finished off European anarchist movements in the years before and during the war, but in the post-war period

these movements were prevented from recovering by the capitalist West on one hand and the Leninist East on the other. Over the same period of time, anarchism had been repressed in the US, Latin America, China, Korea (where a social revolution with anarchist content was put down before the Korean War), and Japan. Even in the one or two countries that escaped the worst of the repression, the combination of the Cold War and international isolation saw libertarian unions like the Swedish SAC become reformist.

But the 60's were a decade of new struggle, and all over the world the 'New Left' looked to anarchism as well as elsewhere for its ideas. Many of the prominent figures of the massive explosion of May 1968 in France considered themselves anarchists. Although these movements themselves degenerated, those coming out of them kept the idea alive and began to construct new movements. The death of Franco in 1975 saw a massive rebirth of anarchism in Spain, with up to 500,000 people attending the CNT's first post-Franco rally. The return to a limited democracy in some South American countries in the late 70's and 80's saw a growth in anarchism there. Finally, in the late 80's it was anarchists who struck the first blows against the Leninist USSR, with the first protest march since 1928 being held in Moscow by anarchists in 1987.

Today the anarchist movement, although still weak, organises tens of thousands of revolutionaries in many countries. Spain, Sweden and Italy all have libertarian union movements organising some 250,000 between them. Most other European countries have several thousand active anarchists. Anarchist groups have appeared for the first time in other countries, including Nigeria and Turkey. In South America the movement has recovered massively. A contact sheet circulated by the Venezuelan anarchist group **Corrio A** lists over 100 organisations in just about every country.

Perhaps the recovery is slowest in North America, but there, too, all the libertarian organisations seem to be undergoing sig-

social one. Until the return of Lenin from exile, they were the only political tendency who thought along those lines.

Lenin convinced his party to adopt the slogan *"All Power to the Soviets"* and push the revolution forward. This meant a sharp break with previous Marxist positions, leading one ex-Bolshevik turned Menshevik to comment that Lenin had *"made himself a candidate for one European throne that has been vacant for thirty years – the throne of Bakunin!"* [quoted by Alexander Rabinowitch, **Prelude to Revolution**, p. 40] The Bolsheviks now turned to winning mass support, championing direct action and supporting the radical actions of the masses, policies in the past associated with anarchism (*"the Bolsheviks launched . . . slogans which until then had been particularly and insistently been voiced by the Anarchists."* [Voline, **The Unknown Revolution**, p. 210]). Soon they were winning more and more votes in the soviet and factory committee elections. As Alexander Berkman argues, the *"Anarchist mottoes proclaimed by the Bolsheviks did not fail to bring results. The masses relied to their flag."* [**What is Anarchism?**, p. 120]

The anarchists were also influential at this time. Anarchists were particularly active in the movement for workers self-management of production which existed around the factory committees (see M. Brinton, **The Bolsheviks and Workers Control** for details). They were arguing for workers and peasants to expropriate the owning class, abolish all forms of government and re-organise society from the bottom up using their own class organisations – the soviets, the factory committees, co-operatives and so on. They could also influence the direction of struggle. As Alexander Rabinowitch (in his study of the July uprising of 1917) notes:

> *"At the rank-and-file level, particularly within the [Petrograd] garrison and at the Kronstadt naval base, there was in fact very little to distinguish Bolshevik from Anarchist. . . The Anarchist-*

"Petrograd organisation of the Bolsheviks oppos[ing] the calling of strikes precisely on the eve of the revolution destined to overthrow the Tsar. Fortunately, the workers ignored the Bolshevik 'directives' and went on strike anyway . . . Had the workers followed its guidance, it is doubtful that the revolution would have occurred when it did." [Murray Bookchin, **Post-Scarcity Anarchism**, p. 123]

The revolution carried on in this vein of direct action from below until the new, "socialist" state was powerful enough to stop it.

For the Left, the end of Tsarism was the culmination of years of effort by socialists and anarchists everywhere. It represented the progressive wing of human thought overcoming traditional oppression, and as such was duly praised by leftists around the world. However, **in** Russia things were progressing. In the workplaces and streets and on the land, more and more people became convinced that abolishing feudalism politically was **not** enough. The overthrow of the Tsar made little real difference if feudal exploitation still existed in the economy, so workers started to seize their workplaces and peasants, the land. All across Russia, ordinary people started to build their own organisations, unions, co-operatives, factory committees and councils (or "soviets" in Russian). These organisations were initially organised in anarchist fashion, with recallable delegates and being federated with each other.

Needless to say, all the political parties and organisations played a role in this process. The two wings of the Marxist social-democrats were active (the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks), as were the Social Revolutionaries (a populist peasant based party) and the anarchists. The anarchists participated in this movement, encouraging all tendencies to self-management and urging the overthrow of the provisional government. They argued that it was necessary to transform the revolution from a purely political one into an economic/

nificant growth. As this growth accelerates, many more examples of anarchy in action will be created and more and more people will take part in anarchist organisations and activities, making this part of the FAQ less and less important.

However, it is essential to highlight mass examples of anarchism working on a large scale in order to avoid the specious accusation of "utopianism." As history is written by the winners, these examples of anarchy in action are often hidden from view in obscure books. Rarely are they mentioned in the schools and universities (or if mentioned, they are distorted). Needless to say, the few examples we give are just that, a few.

Anarchism has a long history in many countries, and we cannot attempt to document every example, just those we consider to be important. We are also sorry if the examples seem Eurocentric. We have, due to space and time considerations, had to ignore the syndicalist revolt (1910 to 1914) and the shop steward movement (1917-21) in Britain, Germany (1919-21), Portugal (1974), the Mexican revolution, anarchists in the Cuban revolution, the struggle in Korea against Japanese (then US and Russian) imperialism during and after the Second World War, Hungary (1956), the "the refusal of work" revolt in the late 1960's (particularly in "the hot Autumn" in Italy, 1969), the UK miner's strike (1984-85), the struggle against the Poll Tax in Britain (1988-92), the strikes in France in 1986 and 1995, the Italian COBAS movement in the 80's and 90's, the popular assemblies and self-managed occupied workplaces during the Argentine revolt at the start of the 21st century and numerous other major struggles that have involved anarchist ideas of self-management (ideas that usually develop from the movement themselves, without anarchists necessarily playing a major, or "leading", role).

For anarchists, revolutions and mass struggles are ***"festivals of the oppressed,"*** when ordinary people start to act for themselves and change both themselves and the world.

A.5.1 The Paris Commune

The Paris Commune of 1871 played an important role in the development of both anarchist ideas and the movement. As Bakunin commented at the time,

> *"revolutionary socialism [i.e. anarchism] has just attempted its first striking and practical demonstration in the Paris Commune . . . [It] show[ed] to all enslaved peoples (and are there any masses that are not slaves?) the only road to emancipation and health; Paris inflict[ed] a mortal blow upon the political traditions of bourgeois radicalism and [gave] a real basis to revolutionary socialism."* [**Bakunin on Anarchism**, pp. 263-4]

The Paris Commune was created after France was defeated by Prussia in the Franco-Prussian war. The French government tried to send in troops to regain the Parisian National Guard's cannon to prevent it from falling into the hands of the population. *"Learning that the Versailles soldiers were trying to seize the cannon,"* recounted participant Louise Michel, *"men and women of Montmartre swarmed up the Butte in surprise manoeuvre. Those people who were climbing up the Butte believed they would die, but they were prepared to pay the price."* The soldiers refused to fire on the jeering crowd and turned their weapons on their officers. This was March 18th; the Commune had begun and *"the people wakened . . . The eighteenth of March could have belonged to the allies of kings, or to foreigners, or to the people. It was the people's."* [**Red Virgin: Memoirs of Louise Michel**, p. 64]

In the free elections called by the Parisian National Guard, the citizens of Paris elected a council made up of a majority of Jacobins and Republicans and a minority of socialists (mostly Blanquists – authoritarian socialists – and followers of the anarchist Proudhon). This council proclaimed Paris autonomous

counts will praise the workers when they move ahead of the Bolsheviks (as in the spring and summer of 1917) but will condemn them when they oppose Bolshevik policy once the Bolsheviks are in power. At worse, Leninist accounts portray the movement and struggles of the masses as little more than a backdrop to the activities of the vanguard party.

For anarchists, however, the Russian Revolution is seen as a classic example of a social revolution in which the self-activity of working people played a key role. In their soviets, factory committees and other class organisations, the Russian masses were trying to transform society from a class-ridden, hierarchical statist regime into one based on liberty, equality and solidarity. As such, the initial months of the Revolution seemed to confirm Bakunin's prediction that the *"future social organisation must be made solely from the bottom upwards, by the free associations or federations of workers, firstly in their unions, then in the communes, regions, nations and finally in a great federation, international and universal."* [**Michael Bakunin: Selected Writings**, p. 206] The soviets and factory committees expressed concretely Bakunin's ideas and Anarchists played an important role in the struggle.

The initial overthrow of the Tsar came from the direct action of the masses. In February 1917, the women of Petrograd erupted in bread riots. On February 18th, the workers of the Putilov Works in Petrograd went on strike. By February 22nd, the strike had spread to other factories. Two days later, 200 000 workers were on strike and by February 25th the strike was virtually general. The same day also saw the first bloody clashes between protestors and the army. The turning point came on the 27th, when some troops went over to the revolutionary masses, sweeping along other units. This left the government without its means of coercion, the Tsar abdicated and a provisional government was formed.

So spontaneous was this movement that all the political parties were left behind. This included the Bolsheviks, with the

bring about the seizure of the entire social wealth by the workers in order to transform it into common property. This revolution can succeed only through the workers, only if the urban and rural workers everywhere carry out this objective themselves. To that end, they must initiate their own action in the period ***before the revolution****; this can happen only if there is a strong* ***workers' organisation.****"* [**Selected Writings on Anarchism and Revolution**, p. 20] Such popular self-managed organisations cannot be anything but ***"anarchy in action."***

A.5.4 Anarchists in the Russian Revolution

The Russian revolution of 1917 saw a huge growth in anarchism in that country and many experiments in anarchist ideas. However, in popular culture the Russian Revolution is seen not as a mass movement by ordinary people struggling towards freedom but as the means by which Lenin imposed his dictatorship on Russia. The truth is radically different. The Russian Revolution was a mass movement from below in which many different currents of ideas existed and in which millions of working people (workers in the cities and towns as well as peasants) tried to transform their world into a better place. Sadly, those hopes and dreams were crushed under the dictatorship of the Bolshevik party – first under Lenin, later under Stalin.

The Russian Revolution, like most history, is a good example of the maxim "history is written by those who win." Most capitalist histories of the period between 1917 and 1921 ignore what the anarchist Voline called ***"the unknown revolution"*** – the revolution called forth from below by the actions of ordinary people. Leninist accounts, at best, praise this autonomous activity of workers so long as it coincides with their own party line but radically condemn it (and attribute it with the basest motives) as soon as it strays from that line. Thus Leninist ac-

and desired to recreate France as a confederation of communes (i.e. communities). Within the Commune, the elected council people were recallable and paid an average wage. In addition, they had to report back to the people who had elected them and were subject to recall by electors if they did not carry out their mandates.

Why this development caught the imagination of anarchists is clear – it has strong similarities with anarchist ideas. In fact, the example of the Paris Commune was in many ways similar to how Bakunin had predicted that a revolution would have to occur – a major city declaring itself autonomous, organising itself, leading by example, and urging the rest of the planet to follow it. (See *"Letter to Albert Richards"* in **Bakunin on Anarchism**). The Paris Commune began the process of creating a new society, one organised from the bottom up. It was *"a blow for the decentralisation of political power."* [Voltairine de Cleyre, *"The Paris Commune,"* **Anarchy! An Anthology of Emma Goldman's Mother Earth**, p. 67]

Many anarchists played a role within the Commune – for example Louise Michel, the Reclus brothers, and Eugene Varlin (the latter murdered in the repression afterwards). As for the reforms initiated by the Commune, such as the re-opening of workplaces as co-operatives, anarchists can see their ideas of associated labour beginning to be realised. By May, 43 workplaces were co-operatively run and the Louvre Museum was a munitions factory run by a workers' council. Echoing Proudhon, a meeting of the Mechanics Union and the Association of Metal Workers argued that *"our economic emancipation . . . can only be obtained through the formation of workers' associations, which alone can transform our position from that of wage earners to that of associates."* They instructed their delegates to the Commune's Commission on Labour Organisation to support the following objectives:

> *"The abolition of the exploitation of man by man, the last vestige of slavery;*
>
> *"The organisation of labour in mutual associations and inalienable capital."*

In this way, they hoped to ensure that *"equality must not be an empty word"* in the Commune. [**The Paris Commune of 1871: The View from the Left**, Eugene Schulkind (ed.), p. 164] The Engineers Union voted at a meeting on 23rd of April that since the aim of the Commune should be *"economic emancipation"* it should *"organise labour through associations in which there would be joint responsibility"* in order *"to suppress the exploitation of man by man."* [quoted by Stewart Edwards, **The Paris Commune 1871**, pp. 263-4]

As well as self-managed workers' associations, the Communards practised direct democracy in a network popular clubs, popular organisations similar to the directly democratic neighbourhood assemblies (*"sections"*) of the French Revolution. *"People, govern yourselves through your public meetings, through your press"* proclaimed the newspaper of one Club. The commune was seen as an expression of the assembled people, for (to quote another Club) *"Communal power resides in each arrondissement [neighbourhood] wherever men are assembled who have a horror of the yoke and of servitude."* Little wonder that Gustave Courbet, artist friend and follower of Proudhon, proclaimed Paris as *"a true paradise . . . all social groups have established themselves as federations and are masters of their own fate."* [quoted by Martin Phillip Johnson, **The Paradise of Association**, p. 5 and p. 6]

In addition the Commune's *"Declaration to the French People"* which echoed many key anarchist ideas. It saw the *"political unity"* of society as being based on *"the voluntary association of all local initiatives, the free and spontaneous concourse of all individual energies for the common aim, the well-being, the liberty and the security of all."* [quoted by Edwards, **Op. Cit.**, p.

Such ideas were repeated by other libertarians. Eugene Varlin, whose role in the Paris Commune ensured his death, advocated a socialism of associations, arguing in 1870 that syndicates were the *"natural elements"* for the rebuilding of society: *"it is they that can easily be transformed into producer associations; it is they that can put into practice the retooling of society and the organisation of production."* [quoted by Martin Phillip Johnson, **The Paradise of Association**, p. 139] As we discussed in section A.5.2, the Chicago Anarchists held similar views, seeing the labour movement as both the means of achieving anarchy and the framework of the free society. As Lucy Parsons (the wife of Albert) put it *"we hold that the granges, trade-unions, Knights of Labour assemblies, etc., are the embryonic groups of the ideal anarchistic society . . ."* [contained in Albert R. Parsons, **Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Scientific Basis**, p. 110] These ideas fed into the revolutionary unionism of the I.W.W. As one historian notes, the *"proceedings of the I.W.W.'s inaugural convention indicate that the participants were not only aware of the 'Chicago Idea' but were conscious of a continuity between their efforts and the struggles of the Chicago anarchists to initiate industrial unionism."* The Chicago idea represented *"the earliest American expression of syndicalism."* [Salvatore Salerno, **Red November, Black November**, p. 71]

Thus, syndicalism and anarchism are not differing theories but, rather, different interpretations of the same ideas (see for a fuller discussion section H.2.8). While not all syndicalists are anarchists (some Marxists have proclaimed support for syndicalism) and not all anarchists are syndicalists (see section J.3.9 for a discussion why), all social anarchists see the need for taking part in the labour and other popular movements and encouraging libertarian forms of organisation and struggle within them. By doing this, inside and outside of syndicalist unions, anarchists are showing the validity of our ideas. For, as Kropotkin stressed, the *"next revolution must from its inception*

their members. In France, Spain and Italy and elsewhere, syndicalist unions are again on the rise, showing that anarchist ideas are applicable in everyday life.

Finally, it must be stressed that syndicalism has its roots in the ideas of the earliest anarchists and, consequently, was not invented in the 1890s. It is true that development of syndicalism came about, in part, as a reaction to the disastrous "propaganda by deed" period, in which individual anarchists assassinated government leaders in attempts to provoke a popular uprising and in revenge for the mass murders of the Communards and other rebels (see section A.2.18 for details). But in response to this failed and counterproductive campaign, anarchists went back to their roots and to the ideas of Bakunin. Thus, as recognised by the likes of Kropotkin and Malatesta, syndicalism was simply a return to the ideas current in the libertarian wing of the First International.

Thus we find Bakunin arguing that *"it is necessary to organise the power of the proletariat. But this organisation must be the work of the proletariat itself . . . Organise, constantly organise the international militant solidarity of the workers, in every trade and country, and remember that however weak you are as isolated individuals or districts, you will constitute a tremendous, invincible power by means of universal co-operation."* As one American activist commented, this is *"the same militant spirit that breathes now in the best expressions of the Syndicalist and I.W.W. movements"* both of which express *"a strong world wide revival of the ideas for which Bakunin laboured throughout his life."* [Max Baginski, **Anarchy! An Anthology of Emma Goldman's Mother Earth**, p. 71] As with the syndicalists, Bakunin stressed the *"organisation of trade sections, their federation . . . bear in themselves the living germs of* ***the new social order,*** *which is to replace the bourgeois world. They are creating not only the ideas but also the facts of the future itself."* [quoted by Rudolf Rocker, **Op. Cit.**, p. 50]

218] The new society envisioned by the communards was one based on the *"absolute autonomy of the Commune . . . assuring to each its integral rights and to each Frenchman the full exercise of his aptitudes, as a man, a citizen and a labourer. The autonomy of the Commune will have for its limits only the equal autonomy of all other communes adhering to the contract; their association must ensure the liberty of France."* [*"Declaration to the French People"*, quoted by George Woodcock, **Pierre-Joseph Proudhon: A Biography**, pp. 276-7] With its vision of a confederation of communes, Bakunin was correct to assert that the Paris Commune was *"a bold, clearly formulated negation of the State."* [**Bakunin on Anarchism**, p. 264]

Moreover, the Commune's ideas on federation obviously reflected the influence of Proudhon on French radical ideas. Indeed, the Commune's vision of a communal France based on a federation of delegates bound by imperative mandates issued by their electors and subject to recall at any moment echoes Proudhon's ideas (Proudhon had argued in favour of the *"implementation of the binding mandate"* in 1848 [**No Gods, No Masters**, p. 63] and for federation of communes in his work **The Principle of Federation**).

Thus both economically and politically the Paris Commune was heavily influenced by anarchist ideas. Economically, the theory of associated production expounded by Proudhon and Bakunin became consciously revolutionary practice. Politically, in the Commune's call for federalism and autonomy, anarchists see their *"future social organisation. . . [being] carried out from the bottom up, by the free association or federation of workers, starting with associations, then going into the communes, the regions, the nations, and, finally, culminating in a great international and universal federation."* [Bakunin, **Op. Cit.**, p. 270]

However, for anarchists the Commune did not go far enough. It did not abolish the state within the Commune, as it had abolished it beyond it. The Communards organised themselves *"in*

a Jacobin manner" (to use Bakunin's cutting term). As Peter Kropotkin pointed out, while *"proclaiming the free Commune, the people of Paris proclaimed an essential anarchist principle . . . they stopped mid-course"* and gave *"themselves a Communal Council copied from the old municipal councils."* Thus the Paris Commune did not *"break with the tradition of the State, of representative government, and it did not attempt to achieve within the Commune that organisation from the simple to the complex it inaugurated by proclaiming the independence and free federation of the Communes."* This lead to disaster as the Commune council became *"immobilised . . . by red tape"* and lost *"the sensitivity that comes from continued contact with the masses . . . Paralysed by their distancing from the revolutionary centre – the people – they themselves paralysed the popular initiative."* [**Words of a Rebel**, p. 97, p. 93 and p. 97]

In addition, its attempts at economic reform did not go far enough, making no attempt to turn all workplaces into co-operatives (i.e. to expropriate capital) and forming associations of these co-operatives to co-ordinate and support each other's economic activities. Paris, stressed Voltairine de Cleyre, *"failed to strike at economic tyranny, and so came of what it could have achieved"* which was a *"free community whose economic affairs shall be arranged by the groups of actual producers and distributors, eliminating the useless and harmful element now in possession of the world's capital."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 67] As the city was under constant siege by the French army, it is understandable that the Communards had other things on their minds. However, for Kropotkin such a position was a disaster:

> *"They treated the economic question as a secondary one, which would be attended to later on, **after** the triumph of the Commune . . . But the crushing defeat which soon followed, and the blood-thirsty revenge taken by the middle class, proved once more that the*

Spain, the CNT (the most famous anarcho-syndicalist union) fought a similar battle. By 1936, it claimed one and a half million members. As in Italy and Portugal, the capitalist class embraced fascism to save their power from the dispossessed, who were becoming confident of their power and their right to manage their own lives (see section A.5.6).

As well as fascism, syndicalism also faced the negative influence of Leninism. The apparent success of the Russian revolution led many activists to turn to authoritarian politics, particularly in English speaking countries and, to a lesser extent, France. Such notable syndicalist activists as Tom Mann in England, William Gallacher in Scotland and William Foster in the USA became Communists (the last two, it should be noted, became Stalinist). Moreover, Communist parties deliberately undermined the libertarian unions, encouraging fights and splits (as, for example, in the I.W.W.). After the end of the Second World War, the Stalinists finished off what fascism had started in Eastern Europe and destroyed the anarchist and syndicalist movements in such places as Bulgaria and Poland. In Cuba, Castro also followed Lenin's example and did what the Batista and Machado dictatorship's could not, namely smash the influential anarchist and syndicalist movements (see Frank Fernandez's **Cuban Anarchism** for a history of this movement from its origins in the 1860s to the 21st century).

So by the start of the second world war, the large and powerful anarchist movements of Italy, Spain, Poland, Bulgaria and Portugal had been crushed by fascism (but not, we must stress, without a fight). When necessary, the capitalists supported authoritarian states in order to crush the labour movement and make their countries safe for capitalism. Only Sweden escaped this trend, where the syndicalist union the SAC is still organising workers. It is, in fact, like many other syndicalist unions active today, growing as workers turn away from bureaucratic unions whose leaders seem more interested in protecting their privileges and cutting deals with management than defending

of anarcho-syndicalist unions and their impact on the labour movement. The Industrial Workers of the World, for example, still inspires union activists and has, throughout its long history, provided many union songs and slogans.

However, as a mass movement, syndicalism effectively ended by the 1930s. This was due to two factors. Firstly, most of the syndicalist unions were severely repressed just after World War I. In the immediate post-war years they reached their height. This wave of militancy was known as the "red years" in Italy, where it attained its high point with factory occupations (see section A.5.5). But these years also saw the destruction of these unions in country after county. In the USA, for example, the I.W.W. was crushed by a wave of repression backed whole-heartedly by the media, the state, and the capitalist class. Europe saw capitalism go on the offensive with a new weapon – fascism. Fascism arose (first in Italy and, most infamously, in Germany) as an attempt by capitalism to physically smash the organisations the working class had built. This was due to radicalism that had spread across Europe in the wake of the war ending, inspired by the example of Russia. Numerous near revolutions had terrified the bourgeoisie, who turned to fascism to save their system.

In country after country, anarchists were forced to flee into exile, vanish from sight, or became victims of assassins or concentration camps after their (often heroic) attempts at fighting fascism failed. In Portugal, for example, the 100,000 strong anarcho-syndicalist CGT union launched numerous revolts in the late 1920s and early 1930s against fascism. In January 1934, the CGT called for a revolutionary general strike which developed into a five day insurrection. A state of siege was declared by the state, which used extensive force to crush the rebellion. The CGT, whose militants had played a prominent and courageous role in the insurrection, was completely smashed and Portugal remained a fascist state for the next 40 years. [Phil Mailer, **Portugal: The Impossible Revolution**, pp. 72-3] In

> *triumph of a popular Commune was materially impossible without a parallel triumph of the people in the economic field."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 74]

Anarchists drew the obvious conclusions, arguing that *"if no central government was needed to rule the independent Communes, if the national Government is thrown overboard and national unity is obtained by free federation, then a central* ***municipal*** *Government becomes equally useless and noxious. The same federative principle would do within the Commune."* [Kropotkin, **Evolution and Environment**, p. 75] Instead of abolishing the state within the commune by organising federations of directly democratic mass assemblies, like the Parisian "sections" of the revolution of 1789-93 (see Kropotkin's **Great French Revolution** for more on these), the Paris Commune kept representative government and suffered for it. *"Instead of acting for themselves . . . the people, confiding in their governors, entrusted them the charge of taking the initiative. This was the first consequence of the inevitable result of elections."* The council soon became *"the greatest obstacle to the revolution"* thus proving the *"political axiom that a government cannot be revolutionary."* [**Anarchism**, p. 240, p. 241 and p. 249]

The council become more and more isolated from the people who elected it, and thus more and more irrelevant. And as its irrelevance grew, so did its authoritarian tendencies, with the Jacobin majority creating a *"Committee of Public Safety"* to *"defend"* (by terror) the "revolution." The Committee was opposed by the libertarian socialist minority and was, fortunately, ignored in practice by the people of Paris as they defended their freedom against the French army, which was attacking them in the name of capitalist civilisation and "liberty." On May 21st, government troops entered the city, followed by seven days of bitter street fighting. Squads of soldiers and armed members of the bourgeoisie roamed the streets, killing and maiming at will. Over 25,000 people were killed in the street fighting, many

murdered after they had surrendered, and their bodies dumped in mass graves. As a final insult, **Sacré Coeur** was built by the bourgeoisie on the birth place of the Commune, the Butte of Montmartre, to atone for the radical and atheist revolt which had so terrified them.

For anarchists, the lessons of the Paris Commune were threefold. Firstly, a decentralised confederation of communities is the necessary political form of a free society (*"**This was the form that the social revolution must take** – the independent commune."* [Kropotkin, **Op. Cit.**, p. 163]). Secondly, *"there is no more reason for a government inside a Commune than for government above the Commune."* This means that an anarchist community will be based on a confederation of neighbourhood and workplace assemblies freely co-operating together. Thirdly, it is critically important to unify political and economic revolutions into a **social** revolution. *"They tried to consolidate the Commune first and put off the social revolution until later, whereas the only way to proceed was **to consolidate the Commune by means of the social revolution!**"* [Peter Kropotkin, **Words of a Rebel** , p. 97]

For more anarchist perspectives on the Paris Commune see Kropotkin's essay *"The Paris Commune"* in **Words of a Rebel** (and **The Anarchist Reader**) and Bakunin's *"The Paris Commune and the Idea of the State"* in **Bakunin on Anarchism**.

A.5.2 The Haymarket Martyrs

May 1st is a day of special significance for the labour movement. While it has been hijacked in the past by the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union and elsewhere, the labour movement festival of May Day is a day of world-wide solidarity. A time to remember past struggles and demonstrate our hope for a better future. A day to remember that an injury to one is an injury to all.

capitalism by the unions providing the basic framework of the new, free, society.

Thus, for anarcho-syndicalism, *"the trade union is by no means a mere transitory phenomenon bound up with the duration of capitalist society, it is the germ of the Socialist economy of the future, the elementary school of Socialism in general."* The *"economic fighting organisation of the workers"* gives their members *"every opportunity for direct action in their struggles for daily bread, it also provides them with the necessary preliminaries for carrying through the reorganisation of social life on a [libertarian] Socialist plan by them own strength."* [Rudolf Rocker, **Anarcho-Syndicalism**, p. 59 and p. 62] Anarcho-syndicalism, to use the expression of the I.W.W., aims to build the new world in the shell of the old.

In the period from the 1890's to the outbreak of World War I, anarchists built revolutionary unions in most European countries (particularly in Spain, Italy and France). In addition, anarchists in South and North America were also successful in organising syndicalist unions (particularly Cuba, Argentina, Mexico and Brazil). Almost all industrialised countries had some syndicalist movement, although Europe and South America had the biggest and strongest ones. These unions were organised in a confederal manner, from the bottom up, along anarchist lines. They fought with capitalists on a day-to-day basis around the issue of better wages and working conditions and the state for social reforms, but they also sought to overthrow capitalism through the revolutionary general strike.

Thus hundreds of thousands of workers around the world were applying anarchist ideas in everyday life, proving that anarchy was no utopian dream but a practical method of organising on a wide scale. That anarchist organisational techniques encouraged member participation, empowerment and militancy, and that they also successfully fought for reforms and promoted class consciousness, can be seen in the growth

for called **Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Scientific Basis**. Historian Paul Avrich's **The Haymarket Tragedy** is a useful in depth account of the events.

A.5.3 Building the Syndicalist Unions

Just before the turn of the century in Europe, the anarchist movement began to create one of the most successful attempts to apply anarchist organisational ideas in everyday life. This was the building of mass revolutionary unions (also known as syndicalism or anarcho-syndicalism). The syndicalist movement, in the words of a leading French syndicalist militant, was *"a practical schooling in anarchism"* for it was *"a laboratory of economic struggles"* and organised *"along anarchic lines."* By organising workers into *"libertarian organisations,"* the syndicalist unions were creating the *"free associations of free producers"* within capitalism to combat it and, ultimately, replace it. [Fernand Pelloutier, **No Gods, No Masters**, vol. 2, p. 57, p. 55 and p. 56]

While the details of syndicalist organisation varied from country to country, the main lines were the same. Workers should form themselves into unions (or ***syndicates***, the French for union). While organisation by industry was generally the preferred form, craft and trade organisations were also used. These unions were directly controlled by their members and would federate together on an industrial and geographical basis. Thus a given union would be federated with all the local unions in a given town, region and country as well as with all the unions within its industry into a national union (of, say, miners or metal workers). Each union was autonomous and all officials were part-time (and paid their normal wages if they missed work on union business). The tactics of syndicalism were direct action and solidarity and its aim was to replace

The history of Mayday is closely linked with the anarchist movement and the struggles of working people for a better world. Indeed, it originated with the execution of four anarchists in Chicago in 1886 for organising workers in the fight for the eight-hour day. Thus May Day is a product of ***"anarchy in action"*** – of the struggle of working people using direct action in labour unions to change the world.

It began in the 1880s in the USA. In 1884, the **Federation of Organised Trades and Labor Unions of the United States and Canada** (created in 1881, it changed its name in 1886 to the **American Federation of Labor**) passed a resolution which asserted that *"eight hours shall constitute a legal day's work from and after May 1, 1886, and that we recommend to labour organisations throughout this district that they so direct their laws as to conform to this resolution."* A call for strikes on May 1st, 1886 was made in support of this demand.

In Chicago the anarchists were the main force in the union movement, and partially as a result of their presence, the unions translated this call into strikes on May 1st. The anarchists thought that the eight hour day could only be won through direct action and solidarity. They considered that struggles for reforms, like the eight hour day, were not enough in themselves. They viewed them as only one battle in an ongoing class war that would only end by social revolution and the creation of a free society. It was with these ideas that they organised and fought.

In Chicago alone, 400 000 workers went out and the threat of strike action ensured that more than 45 000 were granted a shorter working day without striking. On May 3, 1886, police fired into a crowd of pickets at the McCormick Harvester Machine Company, killing at least one striker, seriously wounding five or six others, and injuring an undetermined number. Anarchists called for a mass meeting the next day in Haymarket Square to protest the brutality. According to the Mayor, *"nothing had occurred yet, or looked likely to occur to require*

interference." However, as the meeting was breaking up a column of 180 police arrived and ordered the meeting to end. At this moment a bomb was thrown into the police ranks, who opened fire on the crowd. How many civilians were wounded or killed by the police was never exactly ascertained, but 7 policemen eventually died (ironically, only one was the victim of the bomb, the rest were a result of the bullets fired by the police [Paul Avrich, **The Haymarket Tragedy**, p. 208]).

A *"reign of terror"* swept over Chicago, and the *"organised banditti and conscienceless brigands of capital suspended the only papers which would give the side of those whom they crammed into prison cells. They have invaded the homes of everyone who has ever known to have raised a voice or sympathised with those who have aught to say against the present system of robbery and oppression . . . they have invaded their homes and subjected them and their families to indignities that must be seen to be believed."* [Lucy Parsons, **Liberty, Equality & Solidarity**, p. 53] Meeting halls, union offices, printing shops and private homes were raided (usually without warrants). Such raids into working-class areas allowed the police to round up all known anarchists and other socialists. Many suspects were beaten up and some bribed. *"Make the raids first and look up the law afterwards"* was the public statement of J. Grinnell, the States Attorney, when a question was raised about search warrants. [*"Editor's Introduction"*, **The Autobiographies of the Haymarket Martyrs**, p. 7]

Eight anarchists were put on trial for accessory to murder. No pretence was made that any of the accused had carried out or even planned the bomb. The judge ruled that it was not necessary for the state to identify the actual perpetrator or prove that he had acted under the influence of the accused. The state did not try to establish that the defendants had in any way approved or abetted the act. In fact, only three were present at the meeting when the bomb exploded and one of those, Albert Par-

> *"First – Destruction of the existing class rule, by all means, i.e. by energetic, relentless, revolutionary and international action.*
>
> *"Second – Establishment of a free society based upon co-operative organisation of production.*
>
> *"Third – Free exchange of equivalent products by and between the productive organisations without commerce and profit-mongery.*
>
> *"Fourth – Organisation of education on a secular, scientific and equal basis for both sexes.*
>
> *"Fifth – Equal rights for all without distinction to sex or race.*
>
> *"Sixth – Regulation of all public affairs by free contracts between autonomous (independent) communes and associations, resting on a federalistic basis."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 42]

In addition to their union organising, the Chicago anarchist movement also organised social societies, picnics, lectures, dances, libraries and a host of other activities. These all helped to forge a distinctly working-class revolutionary culture in the heart of the *"American Dream."* The threat to the ruling class and their system was too great to allow it to continue (particularly with memories of the vast uprising of labour in 1877 still fresh. As in 1886, that revolt was also meet by state violence – see **Strike!** by J. Brecher for details of this strike movement as well as the Haymarket events). Hence the repression, kangaroo court, and the state murder of those the state and capitalist class considered "leaders" of the movement.

For more on the Haymarket Martyrs, their lives and their ideas, **The Autobiographies of the Haymarket Martyrs** is essential reading. Albert Parsons, the only American born Martyr, produced a book which explained what they stood

in stone on the monument to the Haymarket martyrs in Waldheim Cemetery in Chicago:

> *"The day will come when our silence will be more powerful than the voices you are throttling today."*

To understand why the state and business class were so determined to hang the Chicago Anarchists, it is necessary to realise they were considered the leaders of a massive radical union movement. In 1884, the Chicago Anarchists produced the world's first daily anarchist newspaper, the **Chicagoer Arbeiter-Zeiting**. This was written, read, owned and published by the German immigrant working class movement. The combined circulation of this daily plus a weekly (**Vorbote**) and a Sunday edition (**Fackel**) more than doubled, from 13,000 per issues in 1880 to 26,980 in 1886. Anarchist weekly papers existed for other ethnic groups as well (one English, one Bohemian and one Scandinavian).

Anarchists were very active in the Central Labour Union (which included the eleven largest unions in the city) and aimed to make it, in the words of Albert Parsons (one of the Martyrs), *"the embryonic group of the future 'free society.'"* The anarchists were also part of the **International Working People's Association** (also called the ***"Black International"***) which had representatives from 26 cities at its founding convention. The I.W.P.A. soon *"made headway among trade unions, especially in the mid-west"* and its ideas of *"direct action of the rank and file"* and of trade unions *"serv[ing] as the instrument of the working class for the complete destruction of capitalism and the nucleus for the formation of a new society"* became known as the ***"Chicago Idea"*** (an idea which later inspired the **Industrial Workers of the World** which was founded in Chicago in 1905). [*"Editor's Introduction,"* **The Autobiographies of the Haymarket Martyrs**, p. 4]

This idea was expressed in the manifesto issued at the I.W.P.A.'s Pittsburgh Congress of 1883:

sons, was accompanied by his wife and fellow anarchist Lucy and their two small children to the event.

The reason why these eight were picked was because of their anarchism and union organising, as made clear by that State's Attorney when he told the jury that *"Law is on trial. Anarchy is on trial. These men have been selected, picked out by the Grand Jury, and indicted because they were leaders. They are no more guilty than the thousands who follow them. Gentlemen of the jury; convict these men, make examples of them, hang them and you save our institutions, our society."* The jury was selected by a special bailiff, nominated by the State's Attorney and was explicitly chosen to compose of businessmen and a relative of one of the cops killed. The defence was not allowed to present evidence that the special bailiff had publicly claimed *"I am managing this case and I know what I am about. These fellows are going to be hanged as certain as death."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 8] Not surprisingly, the accused were convicted. Seven were sentenced to death, one to 15 years' imprisonment.

An international campaign resulted in two of the death sentences being commuted to life, but the world wide protest did not stop the US state. Of the remaining five, one (Louis Lingg) cheated the executioner and killed himself on the eve of the execution. The remaining four (Albert Parsons, August Spies, George Engel and Adolph Fischer) were hanged on November 11th 1887. They are known in Labour history as the Haymarket Martyrs. Between 150,000 and 500,000 lined the route taken by the funeral cortege and between 10,000 to 25,000 were estimated to have watched the burial.

In 1889, the American delegation attending the International Socialist congress in Paris proposed that May 1st be adopted as a workers' holiday. This was to commemorate working class struggle and the *"Martyrdom of the Chicago Eight"*. Since then Mayday has became a day for international solidarity. In 1893, the new Governor of Illinois made official what the working class in Chicago and across the world knew all along and par-

doned the Martyrs because of their obvious innocence and because *"the trial was not fair."* To this day, no one knows who threw the bomb – the only definite fact is that it was not any of those who were tried for the act: *"Our comrades were not murdered by the state because they had any connection with the bomb-throwing, but because they had been active in organising the wage-slaves of America."* [Lucy Parsons, **Op. Cit.**, p. 142]

The authorities had believed at the time of the trial that such persecution would break the back of the labour movement. As Lucy Parsons, a participant of the events, noted 20 years later, the Haymarket trial *"was a class trial – relentless, vindictive, savage and bloody. By that prosecution the capitalists sought to break the great strike for the eight-hour day which as being successfully inaugurated in Chicago, this city being the stormcentre of that great movement; and they also intended, by the savage manner in which they conducted the trial of these men, to frighten the working class back to their long hours of toil and low wages from which they were attempting to emerge. The capitalistic class imagined they could carry out their hellish plot by putting to an ignominious death the most progressive leaders among the working class of that day. In executing their bloody deed of judicial murder they succeeded, but in arresting the mighty onward movement of the class struggle they utterly failed."* [Lucy Parsons, **Op. Cit.**, p. 128] In the words of August Spies when he addressed the court after he had been sentenced to die:

> *"If you think that by hanging us you can stamp out the labour movement . . . the movement from which the downtrodden millions, the millions who toil in misery and want, expect salvation – if this is your opinion, then hang us! Here you will tread on a spark, but there and there, behind you – and in front of you, and everywhere, flames blaze up. It is a subterranean fire. You cannot put it out."* [quoted by Paul Avrich, **Op. Cit.**, p. 287]

At the time and in the years to come, this defiance of the state and capitalism was to win thousands to anarchism, particularly in the US itself. Since the Haymarket event, anarchists have celebrated May Day (on the 1st of May – the reformist unions and labour parties moved its marches to the first Sunday of the month). We do so to show our solidarity with other working class people across the world, to celebrate past and present struggles, to show our power and remind the ruling class of their vulnerability. As Nestor Makhno put it:

> *"That day those American workers attempted, by organising themselves, to give expression to their protest against the iniquitous order of the State and Capital of the propertied . . .*
>
> "The workers of Chicago . . . had gathered to resolve, in common, the problems of their lives and their struggles. . .
>
> "Today too . . . the toilers . . . regard the first of May as the occasion of a get-together when they will concern themselves with their own affairs and consider the matter of their emancipation." [**The Struggle Against the State and Other Essays**, pp. 59-60]

Anarchists stay true to the origins of May Day and celebrate its birth in the direct action of the oppressed. It is a classic example of anarchist principles of direct action and solidarity, *"an historic event of great importance, inasmuch as it was, in the first place, the first time that workers themselves had attempted to get a shorter work day by united, simultaneous action . . . this strike was the first in the nature of Direct Action on a large scale, the first in America."* [Lucy Parsons, **Op. Cit.**, pp. 139-40] Oppression and exploitation breed resistance and, for anarchists, May Day is an international symbol of that resistance and power – a power expressed in the last words of August Spies, chiselled

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organising their power over the masses, cannot be the force which will serve to destroy these privileges." [**Anarchism**, p. 170] In the words of an anarchist pamphlet written in 1918:

> *"Bolshevism, day by day and step by step, proves that state power possesses inalienable characteristics; it can change its label, its 'theory', and its servitors, but in essence it merely remains power and despotism in new forms."* [quoted by Paul Avrich, *"The Anarchists in the Russian Revolution,"* pp. 341-350, **Russian Review**, vol. 26, issue no. 4, p. 347]

For insiders, the Revolution had died a few months after the Bolsheviks took over. To the outside world, the Bolsheviks and the USSR came to represent "socialism" even as they systematically destroyed the basis of real socialism. By transforming the soviets into state bodies, substituting party power for soviet power, undermining the factory committees, eliminating democracy in the armed forces and workplaces, repressing the political opposition and workers' protests, the Bolsheviks effectively marginalised the working class from its own revolution. Bolshevik ideology and practice were themselves important and sometimes decisive factors in the degeneration of the revolution and the ultimate rise of Stalinism.

As anarchists had predicted for decades previously, in the space of a few months, and before the start of the Civil War, the Bolshevik's "workers' state" had become, like any state, an alien power **over** the working class and an instrument of minority rule (in this case, the rule of the party). The Civil War accelerated this process and soon party dictatorship was introduced (indeed, leading Bolsheviks began arguing that it was essential in any revolution). The Bolsheviks put down the libertarian socialist elements within their country, with the crushing of the uprising at Kronstadt and the Makhnovist movement in the

Ukraine being the final nails in the coffin of socialism and the subjugation of the soviets.

The Kronstadt uprising of February, 1921, was, for anarchists, of immense importance (see the appendix "What was the Kronstadt Rebellion?" for a full discussion of this uprising). The uprising started when the sailors of Kronstadt supported the striking workers of Petrograd in February, 1921. They raised a 15 point resolution, the first point of which was a call for soviet democracy. The Bolsheviks slandered the Kronstadt rebels as counter-revolutionaries and crushed the revolt. For anarchists, this was significant as the repression could not be justified in terms of the Civil War (which had ended months before) and because it was a major uprising of ordinary people for ***real*** socialism. As Voline puts it:

> *"Kronstadt was the first entirely independent attempt of the people to liberate themselves of all yokes and carry out the Social Revolution: this attempt was made directly . . . by the working masses themselves, without political shepherds, without leaders or tutors. It was the first step towards the third and social revolution."* [Voline, **Op. Cit.**, pp. 537-8]

In the Ukraine, anarchist ideas were most successfully applied. In areas under the protection of the Makhnovist movement, working class people organised their own lives directly, based on their own ideas and needs – true social self-determination. Under the leadership of Nestor Makhno, a self-educated peasant, the movement not only fought against both Red and White dictatorships but also resisted the Ukrainian nationalists. In opposition to the call for "national self-determination," i.e. a new Ukrainian state, Makhno called instead for working class self-determination in the Ukraine and across the world. Makhno inspired his fellow peasants and workers to fight for real freedom:

> *"Conquer or die – such is the dilemma that faces the Ukrainian peasants and workers at this historic moment . . . But we will not conquer in order to repeat the errors of the past years, the error of putting our fate into the hands of new masters; we will conquer in order to take our destinies into our own hands, to conduct our lives according to our own will and our own conception of the truth."* [quoted by Peter Arshinov, **History of the Makhnovist Movement**, p. 58]

To ensure this end, the Makhnovists refused to set up governments in the towns and cities they liberated, instead urging the creation of free soviets so that the working people could govern themselves. Taking the example of Aleksandrovsk, once they had liberated the city the Makhnovists *"immediately invited the working population to participate in a general conference . . . it was proposed that the workers organise the life of the city and the functioning of the factories with their own forces and their own organisations . . . The first conference was followed by a second. The problems of organising life according to principles of self-management by workers were examined and discussed with animation by the masses of workers, who all welcomed this ideas with the greatest enthusiasm . . . Railroad workers took the first step . . . They formed a committee charged with organising the railway network of the region . . . From this point, the proletariat of Aleksandrovsk began to turn systematically to the problem of creating organs of self-management."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 149]

The Makhnovists argued that the *"freedom of the workers and peasants is their own, and not subject to any restriction. It is up to the workers and peasants themselves to act, to organise themselves, to agree among themselves in all aspects of their lives, as they see fit and desire . . . The Makhnovists can do no more than give aid and counsel . . . In no circumstances can they, nor do they wish to, govern."* [Peter Arshinov, quoted by Guerin, **Op.**

Cit., p. 99] In Alexandrovsk, the Bolsheviks proposed to the Makhnovists spheres of action - their Revkom (Revolutionary Committee) would handle political affairs and the Makhnovists military ones. Makhno advised them *"to go and take up some honest trade instead of seeking to impose their will on the workers."* [Peter Arshinov in **The Anarchist Reader**, p. 141]

They also organised free agricultural communes which *"[a]dmittedly . . . were not numerous, and included only a minority of the population . . . But what was most precious was that these communes were formed by the poor peasants themselves. The Makhnovists never exerted any pressure on the peasants, confining themselves to propagating the idea of free communes."* [Arshinov, **History of the Makhnovist Movement**, p. 87] Makhno played an important role in abolishing the holdings of the landed gentry. The local soviet and their district and regional congresses equalised the use of the land between all sections of the peasant community. [**Op. Cit.**, pp. 53-4]

Moreover, the Makhnovists took the time and energy to involve the whole population in discussing the development of the revolution, the activities of the army and social policy. They organised numerous conferences of workers', soldiers' and peasants' delegates to discuss political and social issues as well as free soviets, unions and communes. They organised a regional congress of peasants and workers when they had liberated Aleksandrovsk. When the Makhnovists tried to convene the third regional congress of peasants, workers and insurgents in April 1919 and an extraordinary congress of several regions in June 1919 the Bolsheviks viewed them as counter-revolutionary, tried to ban them and declared their organisers and delegates outside the law.

The Makhnovists replied by holding the conferences anyway and asking *"[c]an there exist laws made by a few people who call themselves revolutionaries, which permit them to outlaw a whole people who are more revolutionary than they are themselves?"* and *"[w]hose interests should the revolution defend: those of the*

Party or those of the people who set the revolution in motion with their blood?" Makhno himself stated that he *"consider[ed] it an inviolable right of the workers and peasants, a right won by the revolution, to call conferences on their own account, to discuss their affairs."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 103 and p. 129]

In addition, the Makhnovists *"fully applied the revolutionary principles of freedom of speech, of thought, of the press, and of political association. In all cities and towns occupied by the Makhnovists, they began by lifting all the prohibitions and repealing all the restrictions imposed on the press and on political organisations by one or another power."* Indeed, the *"only restriction that the Makhnovists considered necessary to impose on the Bolsheviks, the left Socialist-Revolutionaries and other statists was a prohibition on the formation of those 'revolutionary committees' which sought to impose a dictatorship over the people."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 153 and p. 154]

The Makhnovists rejected the Bolshevik corruption of the soviets and instead proposed *"the free and completely independent soviet system of working people without authorities and their arbitrary laws."* Their proclamations stated that the *"working people themselves must freely choose their own soviets, which carry out the will and desires of the working people themselves, that is to say. ADMINISTRATIVE, not ruling soviets."* Economically, capitalism would be abolished along with the state - the land and workshops *"must belong to the working people themselves, to those who work in them, that is to say, they must be socialised."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 271 and p. 273]

The army itself, in stark contrast to the Red Army, was fundamentally democratic (although, of course, the horrific nature of the civil war did result in a few deviations from the ideal – however, compared to the regime imposed on the Red Army by Trotsky, the Makhnovists were much more democratic movement).

The anarchist experiment of self-management in the Ukraine came to a bloody end when the Bolsheviks turned

on the Makhnovists (their former allies against the "Whites," or pro-Tsarists) when they were no longer needed. This important movement is fully discussed in the appendix "Why does the Makhnovist movement show there is an alternative to Bolshevism?" of our FAQ. However, we must stress here the one obvious lesson of the Makhnovist movement, namely that the dictatorial policies pursued by the Bolsheviks were not imposed on them by objective circumstances. Rather, the political ideas of Bolshevism had a clear influence in the decisions they made. After all, the Makhnovists were active in the same Civil War and yet did not pursue the same policies of party power as the Bolsheviks did. Rather, they successfully encouraged working class freedom, democracy and power in extremely difficult circumstances (and in the face of strong Bolshevik opposition to those policies). The received wisdom on the left is that there was no alternative open to the Bolsheviks. The experience of the Makhnovists disproves this. What the masses of people, as well as those in power, do and think politically is as much part of the process determining the outcome of history as are the objective obstacles that limit the choices available. Clearly, ideas do matter and, as such, the Makhnovists show that there was (and is) a practical alternative to Bolshevism – anarchism.

The last anarchist march in Moscow until 1987 took place at the funeral of Kropotkin in 1921, when over 10,000 marched behind his coffin. They carried black banners declaring *"Where there is authority, there is no freedom"* and *"The Liberation of the working class is the task of the workers themselves."* As the procession passed the Butyrki prison, the inmates sang anarchist songs and shook the bars of their cells.

Anarchist opposition within Russia to the Bolshevik regime started in 1918. They were the first left-wing group to be repressed by the new "revolutionary" regime. Outside of Russia, anarchists continued to support the Bolsheviks until news came from anarchist sources about the repressive nature of the

ertarian socialist Maurice Brinton, *"thousands began to query the whole principle of hierarchy . . . Within a matter of days the tremendous creative potentialities of the people suddenly erupted. The boldest and realistic ideas – and they are usually the same – were advocated, argued, applied. Language, rendered stale by decades of bureaucratic mumbo-jumbo, eviscerated by those who manipulate it for advertising purposes, reappeared as something new and fresh. People re-appropriated it in all its fullness. Magnificently apposite and poetic slogans emerged from the anonymous crowd."* [*"Paris: May 1968"*, **For Workers' Power**, p. 253] The working class, fused by the energy and bravado of the students, raised demands that could not be catered for within the confines of the existing system. The General Strike displays with beautiful clarity the potential power that lies in the hands of the working class. The mass assemblies and occupations give an excellent, if short-lived, example of anarchy in action and how anarchist ideas can quickly spread and be applied in practice.

For more details of these events, see participants Daniel and Gabriel Cohn-Bendit's **Obsolete Communism: The Left-Wing Alternative** or Maurice Brinton's eye-witness account *"Paris: may 1968"* (in his **For Workers' Power**). **Beneath the Paving Stones** by edited Dark Star is a good anthology of situationist works relating to Paris 68 (it also contains Brinton's essay).

thought in terms of changing their rulers rather than taking control for themselves.

By June 5th most of the strikes were over and an air of what passes for normality within capitalism had rolled back over France. Any strikes which continued after this date were crushed in a military-style operation using armoured vehicles and guns. On June 7th, they made an assault on the Flins steelworks which started a four-day running battle which left one worker dead. Three days later, Renault strikers were gunned down by police, killing two. In isolation, those pockets of militancy stood no chance. On June 12th, demonstrations were banned, radical groups outlawed, and their members arrested. Under attack from all sides, with escalating state violence and trade union sell-outs, the General Strike and occupations crumbled.

So why did this revolt fail? Certainly not because "vanguard" Bolshevik parties were missing. It was infested with them. Fortunately, the traditional authoritarian left sects were isolated and outraged. Those involved in the revolt did not require a vanguard to tell them what to do, and the "workers' vanguards" frantically ran after the movement trying to catch up with it and control it.

No, it was the lack of independent, self-managed confederal organisations to co-ordinate struggle which resulted in occupations being isolated from each other. So divided, they fell. In addition, Murray Bookchin argues that *"an awareness among the workers that the factories had to be **worked**, not merely occupied or struck,"* was missing. [**Op. Cit.**, p. 182]

This awareness would have been encouraged by the existence of a strong anarchist movement before the revolt. The anti-authoritarian left, though very active, was too weak among striking workers, and so the idea of self-managed organisations and workers self-management was not widespread. However, the May-June revolt shows that events can change very rapidly. *"Under the influence of the students,"* noted lib-

Bolshevik regime (until then, many had discounted negative reports as being from pro-capitalist sources). Once these reliable reports came in, anarchists across the globe rejected Bolshevism and its system of party power and repression. The experience of Bolshevism confirmed Bakunin's prediction that Marxism meant *"the highly despotic government of the masses by a new and very small aristocracy of real or pretended scholars. The people are not learned, so they will be liberated from the cares of government and included in entirety in the governed herd."* [**Statism and Anarchy**, pp. 178-9]

From about 1921 on, anarchists outside of Russia started describing the USSR as *"state-capitalist"* to indicate that although individual bosses might have been eliminated, the Soviet state bureaucracy played the same role as individual bosses do in the West (anarchists **within** Russia had been calling it that since 1918). For anarchists, *"the Russian revolution . . . is trying to reach . . . economic equality . . . this effort has been made in Russia under a strongly centralised party dictatorship . . . this effort to build a communist republic on the basis of a strongly centralised state communism under the iron law of a party dictatorship is bound to end in failure. We are learning to know in Russia how **not** to introduce communism."* [**Anarchism**, p. 254]

This meant exposing that Berkman called **"The Bolshevik Myth,"** the idea that the Russian Revolution was a success and should be copied by revolutionaries in other countries: *"It is imperative to unmask the great delusion, which otherwise might lead the Western workers to the same abyss as their brothers [and sisters] in Russia. It is incumbent upon those who have seen through the myth to expose its true nature."* [*"The Anti-Climax'"*, **The Bolshevik Myth**, p. 342] Moreover, anarchists felt that it was their revolutionary duty not only present and learn from the facts of the revolution but also show solidarity with those subject to Bolshevik dictatorship. As Emma Goldman argued, she had not *"come to Russia expecting to find Anarchism realised."* Such idealism was alien to her (although that has not

stopped Leninists saying the opposite). Rather, she expected to see *"the beginnings of the social changes for which the Revolution had been fought."* She was aware that revolutions were difficult, involving *"destruction"* and *"violence."* That Russia was not perfect was not the source of her vocal opposition to Bolshevism. Rather, it was the fact that *"the Russian people have been **locked out**"* of their own revolution by the Bolshevik state which used *"the sword and the gun to keep the people out."* As a revolutionary she refused *"to side with the master class, which in Russia is called the Communist Party."* [**My Disillusionment in Russia**, p. xlvii and p. xliv]

For more information on the Russian Revolution and the role played by anarchists, see the appendix on "The Russian Revolution" of the FAQ. As well as covering the Kronstadt uprising and the Makhnovists, it discusses why the revolution failed, the role of Bolshevik ideology played in that failure and whether there were any alternatives to Bolshevism.

The following books are also recommended: **The Unknown Revolution** by Voline; **The Guillotine at Work** by G.P. Maximov; **The Bolshevik Myth** and **The Russian Tragedy**, both by Alexander Berkman; **The Bolsheviks and Workers Control** by M. Brinton; **The Kronstadt Uprising** by Ida Mett; **The History of the Makhnovist Movement** by Peter Arshinov; **My Disillusionment in Russia** and **Living My Life** by Emma Goldman; **Nestor Makhno Anarchy's Cossack: The struggle for free soviets in the Ukraine 1917-1921** by Alexandre Skirda.

Many of these books were written by anarchists active during the revolution, many imprisoned by the Bolsheviks and deported to the West due to international pressure exerted by anarcho-syndicalist delegates to Moscow who the Bolsheviks were trying to win over to Leninism. The majority of such delegates stayed true to their libertarian politics and convinced their unions to reject Bolshevism and break with Moscow. By the early 1920's all the anarcho-syndicalist union confederacommittees. The strikes were often run by assemblies as well. As Murray Bookchin argues, the *"hope [of the revolt] lay in the extension of self-management in all its forms – the general assemblies and their administrative forms, the action committees, the factory strike committees – to all areas of the economy, indeed to all areas of life itself."* Within the assemblies, *"a fever of life gripped millions, a rewaking of senses that people never thought they possessed."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 168 and p. 167] It was not a workers' strike or a student strike. It was a **peoples'** strike that cut across almost all class lines.

On May 24th, anarchists organised a demonstration. Thirty thousand marched towards the Palace de la Bastille. The police had the Ministries protected, using the usual devices of tear gas and batons, but the Bourse (Stock Exchange) was left unprotected and a number of demonstrators set fire to it.

It was at this stage that some left-wing groups lost their nerve. The Trotskyist JCR turned people back into the Latin Quarter. Other groups such as UNEF and Parti Socialiste Unife (United Socialist Party) blocked the taking of the Ministries of Finance and Justice. Cohn-Bendit said of this incident *"As for us, we failed to realise how easy it would have been to sweep all these nobodies away. . . .It is now clear that if, on 25 May, Paris had woken to find the most important Ministries occupied, Gaullism would have caved in at once. . . . "* Cohn-Bendit was forced into exile later that very night.

As the street demonstrations grew and occupations continued, the state prepared to use overwhelming means to stop the revolt. Secretly, top generals readied 20,000 loyal troops for use on Paris. Police occupied communications centres like TV stations and Post Offices. By Monday, May 27th, the Government had guaranteed an increase of 35% in the industrial minimum wage and an all round-wage increase of 10%. The leaders of the CGT organised a march of 500,000 workers through the streets of Paris two days later. Paris was covered in posters calling for a *"Government of the People."* Unfortunately the majority still

ou Barbarie, their support for a self-managed revolution from below had a massive influence in the May events and the ideas that inspired it.

On May 14th, the Sud-Aviation workers locked the management in its offices and occupied their factory. They were followed by the Cleon-Renault, Lockhead-Beauvais and Mucel-Orleans factories the next day. That night the National Theatre in Paris was seized to become a permanent assembly for mass debate. Next, France's largest factory, Renault-Billancourt, was occupied. Often the decision to go on indefinite strike was taken by the workers without consulting union officials. By May 17th, a hundred Paris Factories were in the hands of their workers. The weekend of the 19th of May saw 122 factories occupied. By May 20th, the strike and occupations were general and involved six million people. Print workers said they did not wish to leave a monopoly of media coverage to TV and radio, and agreed to print newspapers as long as the press *"carries out with objectivity the role of providing information which is its duty."* In some cases print-workers insisted on changes in headlines or articles before they would print the paper. This happened mostly with the right-wing papers such as ***'Le Figaro'*** or ***'La Nation'***.

With the Renault occupation, the Sorbonne occupiers immediately prepared to join the Renault strikers, and led by anarchist black and red banners, 4,000 students headed for the occupied factory. The state, bosses, unions and Communist Party were now faced with their greatest nightmare – a worker-student alliance. Ten thousand police reservists were called up and frantic union officials locked the factory gates. The Communist Party urged their members to crush the revolt. They united with the government and bosses to craft a series of reforms, but once they turned to the factories they were jeered out of them by the workers.

The struggle itself and the activity to spread it was organised by self-governing mass assemblies and co-ordinated by action

tions had joined with the anarchists in rejecting the "socialism" in Russia as state capitalism and party dictatorship.

A.5.5 Anarchists in the Italian Factory Occupations

After the end of the First World War there was a massive radicalisation across Europe and the world. Union membership exploded, with strikes, demonstrations and agitation reaching massive levels. This was partly due to the war, partly to the apparent success of the Russian Revolution. This enthusiasm for the Russian Revolution even reached Individualist Anarchists like Joseph Labadie, who like many other anti-capitalists, saw *"the red in the east [giving] hope of a brighter day"* and the Bolsheviks as making *"laudable efforts to at least try some way out of the hell of industrial slavery."* [quoted by Carlotta R. Anderson, **All-American Anarchist** p. 225 and p. 241]

Across Europe, anarchist ideas became more popular and anarcho-syndicalist unions grew in size. For example, in Britain, the ferment produced the shop stewards' movement and the strikes on Clydeside; Germany saw the rise of IWW inspired industrial unionism and a libertarian form of Marxism called "Council Communism"; Spain saw a massive growth in the anarcho-syndicalist CNT. In addition, it also, unfortunately, saw the rise and growth of both social democratic and communist parties. Italy was no exception.

In Turin, a new rank-and-file movement was developing. This movement was based around the *"internal commissions"* (elected ad hoc grievance committees). These new organisations were based directly on the group of people who worked together in a particular work shop, with a mandated and recallable shop steward elected for each group of 15 to 20 or so workers. The assembly of all the shop stewards in a given plant then elected the "internal commission" for that facility,

which was directly and constantly responsible to the body of shop stewards, which was called the *"factory council."*

Between November 1918 and March 1919, the internal commissions had become a national issue within the trade union movement. On February 20, 1919, the Italian Federation of Metal Workers (FIOM) won a contract providing for the election of "internal commissions" in the factories. The workers subsequently tried to transform these organs of workers' representation into factory councils with a managerial function. By May Day 1919, the internal commissions *"were becoming the dominant force within the metalworking industry and the unions were in danger of becoming marginal administrative units. Behind these alarming developments, in the eyes of reformists, lay the libertarians."* [Carl Levy, **Gramsci and the Anarchists**, p. 135] By November 1919 the internal commissions of Turin were transformed into factory councils.

The movement in Turin is usually associated with the weekly **L'Ordine Nuovo** (The New Order), which first appeared on May 1, 1919. As Daniel Guerin summarises, it was *"edited by a left socialist, Antonio Gramsci, assisted by a professor of philosophy at Turin University with anarchist ideas, writing under the pseudonym of Carlo Petri, and also of a whole nucleus of Turin libertarians. In the factories, the Ordine Nuovo group was supported by a number of people, especially the anarcho-syndicalist militants of the metal trades, Pietro Ferrero and Maurizio Garino. The manifesto of* ***Ordine Nuovo*** *was signed by socialists and libertarians together, agreeing to regard the factory councils as 'organs suited to future communist management of both the individual factory and the whole society.'"* [**Anarchism**, p. 109]

The developments in Turin should not be taken in isolation. All across Italy, workers and peasants were taking action. In late February 1920, a rash of factory occupations broke out in Liguria, Piedmont and Naples. In Liguria, the workers occupied the metal and shipbuilding plants in Sestri Ponente, Cornigliano and Campi after a breakdown of pay talks. For up

Bookchin pointed out, *"the motive forces of revolution today. . . are not simply scarcity and material need, but also* ***quality of everyday life . . . the attempt to gain control of one's own destiny****."* [**Post-Scarcity Anarchism**, p. 166]

Many of the most famous slogans of those days originated from the Situationists. The **Situationist International** had been formed in 1957 by a small group of dissident radicals and artists. They had developed a highly sophisticated (if jargon riddled) and coherent analysis of modern capitalist society and how to supersede it with a new, freer one. Modern life, they argued, was mere survival rather than living, dominated by the economy of consumption in which everyone, everything, every emotion and relationship becomes a commodity. People were no longer simply alienated producers, they were also alienated consumers. They defined this kind of society as the ***"Spectacle."*** Life itself had been stolen and so revolution meant recreating life. The area of revolutionary change was no longer just the workplace, but in everyday existence:

> *"People who talk about revolution and class struggle without referring explicitly to everyday life, without understanding what is subversive about love and what is positive in the refusal of constraints, such people have a corpse in their mouth."* [quoted by Clifford Harper, **Anarchy: A Graphic Guide**, p. 153]

Like many other groups whose politics influenced the Paris events, the situationists argued that *"the workers' councils are the only answer. Every other form of revolutionary struggle has ended up with the very opposite of what it was originally looking for."* [quoted by Clifford Harper, **Op. Cit.**, p. 149] These councils would be self-managed and not be the means by which a "revolutionary" party would take power. Like the anarchists of **Noire et Rouge** and the libertarian socialists of **Socialisme**

Inspired by this support, the anarchists seized the administration building and held a mass debate. The occupation spread, Nanterre was surrounded by police, and the authorities closed the university down. The next day, the Nanterre students gathered at the Sorbonne University in the centre of Paris. Continual police pressure and the arrest of over 500 people caused anger to erupt into five hours of street fighting. The police even attacked passers-by with clubs and tear gas.

A total ban on demonstrations and the closure of the Sorbonne brought thousands of students out onto the streets. Increasing police violence provoked the building of the first barricades. Jean Jacques Lebel, a reporter, wrote that by 1 a.m., *"[l]iterally thousands helped build barricades. . . women, workers, bystanders, people in pyjamas, human chains to carry rocks, wood, iron."* An entire night of fighting left 350 police injured. On May 7th, a 50,000-strong protest march against the police was transformed into a day-long battle through the narrow streets of the Latin Quarter. Police tear gas was answered by molotov cocktails and the chant *"Long Live the Paris Commune!"*

By May 10th, continuing massive demonstrations forced the Education Minister to start negotiations. But in the streets, 60 barricades had appeared and young workers were joining the students. The trade unions condemned the police violence. Huge demonstrations throughout France culminated on May 13th with one million people on the streets of Paris.

Faced with this massive protest, the police left the Latin Quarter. Students seized the Sorbonne and created a mass assembly to spread the struggle. Occupations soon spread to every French University. From the Sorbonne came a flood of propaganda, leaflets, proclamations, telegrams, and posters. Slogans such as "***Everything is Possible," "Be Realistic, Demand the Impossible," "Life without Dead Times,"*** and ***"It is Forbidden to Forbid"*** plastered the walls. ***"All Power to the Imagination"*** was on everyone's lips. As Murray

to four days, under syndicalist leadership, they ran the plants through factory councils.

During this period the Italian Syndicalist Union (USI) grew in size to around 800 000 members and the influence of the Italian Anarchist Union (UAI) with its 20 000 members and daily paper (**Umanita Nova**) grew correspondingly. As the Welsh Marxist historian Gwyn A. Williams points out *"Anarchists and revolutionary syndicalists were the most consistently and totally revolutionary group on the left . . . the most obvious feature of the history of syndicalism and anarchism in 1919-20: rapid and virtually continuous growth . . . The syndicalists above all captured militant working-class opinion which the socialist movement was utterly failing to capture."* [**Proletarian Order**, pp. 194-195] In Turin, libertarians *"worked within FIOM"* and had been *"heavily involved in the **Ordine Nuovo** campaign from the beginning."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 195] Unsurprisingly, **Ordone Nuovo** was denounced as "syndicalist" by other socialists.

It was the anarchists and syndicalists who first raised the idea of occupying workplaces. Malatesta was discussing this idea in **Umanita Nova** in March, 1920. In his words, *"General strikes of protest no longer upset anyone . . . One must seek something else. We put forward an idea: take-over of factories. . . the method certainly has a future, because it corresponds to the ultimate ends of the workers' movement and constitutes an exercise preparing one for the ultimate act of expropriation."* [**Errico Malatesta: His Life and Ideas**, p. 134] In the same month, during *"a strong syndicalist campaign to establish councils in Mila, Armando Borghi [anarchist secretary of the USI] called for mass factory occupations. In Turin, the re-election of workshop commissars was just ending in a two-week orgy of passionate discussion and workers caught the fever. [Factory Council] Commissars began to call for occupations."* Indeed, *"the council movement outside Turin was essentially anarcho-syndicalist."* Unsurprisingly, the secretary of the syndicalist metal-workers *"urged support for the Turin councils because they represented anti-bureaucratic*

direct action, aimed at control of the factory and could be the first cells of syndicalist industrial unions . . . The syndicalist congress voted to support the councils. . . . Malatesta . . . supported them as a form of direct action guaranteed to generate rebelliousness . . . ***Umanita Nova*** *and* ***Guerra di Classe*** *[paper of the USI] became almost as committed to the councils as* ***L'Ordine Nuovo*** *and the Turin edition of* ***Avanti."*** [Williams, **Op. Cit.**, p. 200, p. 193 and p. 196]

The upsurge in militancy soon provoked an employer counter-offensive. The bosses organisation denounced the factory councils and called for a mobilisation against them. Workers were rebelling and refusing to follow the bosses orders – "indiscipline" was rising in the factories. They won state support for the enforcement of the existing industrial regulations. The national contract won by the FIOM in 1919 had provided that the internal commissions were banned from the shop floor and restricted to non-working hours. This meant that the activities of the shop stewards' movement in Turin – such as stopping work to hold shop steward elections – were in violation of the contract. The movement was essentially being maintained through mass insubordination. The bosses used this infringement of the agreed contract as the means combating the factory councils in Turin.

The showdown with the employers arrived in April, when a general assembly of shop stewards at Fiat called for sit-in strikes to protest the dismissal of several shop stewards. In response the employers declared a general lockout. The government supported the lockout with a mass show of force and troops occupied the factories and mounted machine guns posts at them. When the shop stewards movement decided to surrender on the immediate issues in dispute after two weeks on strike, the employers responded with demands that the shop stewards councils be limited to non-working hours, in accordance with the FIOM national contract, and that managerial control be re-imposed.

> *Socialism quite different from this. The thing that attracts ordinary men to Socialism and makes them willing to risk their skins for it, the 'mystique' of Socialism, is the idea of equality; to the vast majority of people Socialism means a classless society, or it means nothing at all . . . In that community where no one was on the make, where there was a shortage of everything but no boot-licking, one got, perhaps, a crude forecast of what the opening stages of Socialism might be like. And, after all, instead of disillusioning me it deeply attracted me. . ."* [**Op. Cit.**, pp. 83-84]

For more information on the Spanish Revolution, the following books are recommended: **Lessons of the Spanish Revolution** by Vernon Richards; **Anarchists in the Spanish Revolution** and **The CNT in the Spanish Revolution** by Jose Peirats; **Free Women of Spain** by Martha A. Ackelsberg; **The Anarchist Collectives** edited by Sam Dolgoff; *"Objectivity and Liberal Scholarship"* by Noam Chomsky (in **The Chomsky Reader**); **The Anarchists of Casas Viejas** by Jerome R. Mintz; and **Homage to Catalonia** by George Orwell.

A.5.7 The May-June Revolt in France, 1968

The May-June events in France placed anarchism back on the radical landscape after a period in which many people had written the movement off as dead. This revolt of ten million people grew from humble beginnings. Expelled by the university authorities of Nanterre in Paris for anti-Vietnam War activity, a group of anarchists (including Daniel Cohn-Bendit) promptly called a protest demonstration. The arrival of 80 police enraged many students, who quit their studies to join the battle and drive the police from the university.

and section I.8.11 on why this decision was **not** a product of anarchist theory).

Orwell's account of his experiences in the militia's indicates why the Spanish Revolution is so important to anarchists:

> *"I had dropped more or less by chance into the only community of any size in Western Europe where political consciousness and disbelief in capitalism were more normal than their opposites. Up here in Aragon one was among tens of thousands of people, mainly though not entirely of working-class origin, all living at the same level and mingling on terms of equality. In theory it was perfect equality, and even in practice it was not far from it. There is a sense in which it would be true to say that one was experiencing a foretaste of Socialism, by which I mean that the prevailing mental atmosphere was that of Socialism. Many of the normal motives of civilised life – snobbishness, money-grubbing, fear of the boss, etc. – had simply ceased to exist. The ordinary class- division of society had disappeared to an extent that is almost unthinkable in the money-tainted air of England; there was no one there except the peasants and ourselves, and no one owned anyone else as his master. . . One had been in a community where hope was more normal than apathy or cynicism, where the word 'comrade' stood for comradeship and not, as in most countries, for humbug. One had breathed the air of equality. I am well aware that it is now the fashion to deny that Socialism has anything to do with equality. In every country in the world a huge tribe of party-hacks and sleek little professors are busy 'proving' that Socialism means no more than a planned state-capitalism with the grab-motive left intact. But fortunately there also exists a vision of*

These demands were aimed at the heart of the factory council system and Turin labour movement responded with a massive general strike in defence of it. In Turin, the strike was total and it soon spread throughout the region of Piedmont and involved 500 000 workers at its height. The Turin strikers called for the strike to be extended nationally and, being mostly led by socialists, they turned to the CGL trade union and Socialist Party leaders, who rejected their call.

The only support for the Turin general strike came from unions that were mainly under anarcho-syndicalist influence, such as the independent railway and the maritime workers unions (*"The syndicalists were the only ones to move."*). The railway workers in Pisa and Florence refused to transport troops who were being sent to Turin. There were strikes all around Genoa, among dock workers and in workplaces where the USI was a major influence. So in spite of being *"betrayed and abandoned by the whole socialist movement,"* the April movement *"still found popular support"* with *"actions . . . either directly led or indirectly inspired by anarcho-syndicalists."* In Turin itself, the anarchists and syndicalists were *"threatening to cut the council movement out from under"* Gramsci and the **Ordine Nuovo** group. [Williams, **Op. Cit.**, p. 207, p. 193 and p. 194]

Eventually the CGL leadership settled the strike on terms that accepted the employers' main demand for limiting the shop stewards' councils to non-working hours. Though the councils were now much reduced in activity and shop floor presence, they would yet see a resurgence of their position during the September factory occupations.

The anarchists *"accused the socialists of betrayal. They criticised what they believed was a false sense of discipline that had bound socialists to their own cowardly leadership. They contrasted the discipline that placed every movement under the 'calculations, fears, mistakes and possible betrayals of the leaders' to the other discipline of the workers of Sestri Ponente who struck in solidarity with Turin, the discipline of*

the railway workers who refused to transport security forces to Turin and the anarchists and members of the Unione Sindacale who forgot considerations of party and sect to put themselves at the disposition of the Torinesi." [Carl Levy, **Op. Cit.**, p. 161] Sadly, this top-down "discipline" of the socialists and their unions would be repeated during the factory occupations, with terrible results.

In September, 1920, there were large-scale stay-in strikes in Italy in response to an owner wage cut and lockout. *"Central to the climate of the crisis was the rise of the syndicalists."* In mid-August, the USI metal-workers *"called for both unions to occupy the factories"* and called for *"a preventive occupation"* against lock-outs. The USI saw this as the *"expropriation of the factories by the metal-workers"* (which must *"be defended by all necessary measures"*) and saw the need *"to call the workers of other industries into battle."* [Williams, **Op. Cit.**, p. 236, pp. 238-9] Indeed, *"[i]f the FIOM had not embraced the syndicalist idea of an occupation of factories to counter an employer's lockout, the USI may well have won significant support from the politically active working class of Turin."* [Carl Levy, **Op. Cit.**, p. 129] These strikes began in the engineering factories and soon spread to railways, road transport, and other industries, with peasants seizing land. The strikers, however, did more than just occupy their workplaces, they placed them under workers' self-management. Soon over 500 000 "strikers" were at work, producing for themselves. Errico Malatesta, who took part in these events, writes:

> *"The metal workers started the movement over wage rates. It was a strike of a new kind. Instead of abandoning the factories, the idea was to remain inside without working . . . Throughout Italy there was a revolutionary fervour among the workers and soon the demands changed their characters. Workers thought that the moment was ripe to*

and no officer class. Everybody was equal. George Orwell, a member of the POUM militia (the POUM was a dissident Marxist party, influenced by Leninism but not, as the Communists asserted, Trotskyist) makes this clear:

> *"The essential point of the [militia] system was the social equality between officers and men. Everyone from general to private drew the same pay, ate the same food, wore the same clothes, and mingled on terms of complete equality. If you wanted to slap the general commanding the division on the back and ask him for a cigarette, you could do so, and no one thought it curious. In theory at any rate each militia was a democracy and not a hierarchy. It was understood that orders had to be obeyed, but it was also understood that when you gave an order you gave it as comrade to comrade and not as superior to inferior. There were officers and N.C.O.s, but there was no military rank in the ordinary sense; no titles, no badges, no heel-clicking and saluting. They had attempted to produce within the militias a sort of temporary working model of the classless society. Of course there was not perfect equality, but there was a nearer approach to it than I had ever seen or that I would have though conceivable in time of war. . . "* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 26]

In Spain, however, as elsewhere, the anarchist movement was smashed between Stalinism (the Communist Party) on the one hand and Capitalism (Franco) on the other. Unfortunately, the anarchists placed anti-fascist unity before the revolution, thus helping their enemies to defeat both them and the revolution. Whether they were forced by circumstances into this position or could have avoided it is still being debated (see section I.8.10 for a discussion of why the CNT-FAI collaborated

of the different routes that made up the network." [Gaston Leval, **Collectives in the Spanish Revolution**, p. 255]

On the land, tens of thousands of peasants and rural day workers created voluntary, self-managed collectives. The quality of life improved as co-operation allowed the introduction of health care, education, machinery and investment in the social infrastructure. As well as increasing production, the collectives increased freedom. As one member puts it, *"it was marvellous . . . to live in a collective, a free society where one could say what one thought, where if the village committee seemed unsatisfactory one could say. The committee took no big decisions without calling the whole village together in a general assembly. All this was wonderful."* [Ronald Fraser, **Blood of Spain**, p. 360]

We discuss the revolution in more detail in section I.8. For example, sections I.8.3 and I.8.4 discuss in more depth how the industrial collectives. The rural collectives are discussed in sections I.8.5 and I.8.6. We must stress that these sections are summaries of a vast social movement, and more information can be gathered from such works as Gaston Leval's **Collectives in the Spanish Revolution**, Sam Dolfgoff's **The Anarchist Collectives**, Jose Peirats' **The CNT in the Spanish Revolution** and a host of other anarchist accounts of the revolution.

On the social front, anarchist organisations created rational schools, a libertarian health service, social centres, and so on. The ***Mujeres Libres*** (free women) combated the traditional role of women in Spanish society, empowering thousands both inside and outside the anarchist movement (see **The Free Women of Spain** by Martha A. Ackelsberg for more information on this very important organisation). This activity on the social front only built on the work started long before the outbreak of the war; for example, the unions often funded rational schools, workers centres, and so on.

The voluntary militias that went to free the rest of Spain from Franco were organised on anarchist principles and included both men and women. There was no rank, no saluting

> *take possession once [and] for all the means of production. They armed for defence . . . and began to organise production on their own . . . It was the right of property abolished in fact . . .; it was a new regime, a new form of social life that was being ushered in. And the government stood by because it felt impotent to offer opposition."* [**Errico Malatesta: His Life and Ideas**, p. 134]

Daniel Guerin provides a good summary of the extent of the movement:

> *"The management of the factories . . . [was] conducted by technical and administrative workers' committees. Self-management went quite a long way: in the early period assistance was obtained from the banks, but when it was withdrawn the self-management system issued its own money to pay the workers' wages. Very strict self-discipline was required, the use of alcoholic beverages forbidden, and armed patrols were organised for self-defence. Very close solidarity was established between the factories under self-management. Ores and coal were put into a common pool, and shared out equitably."* [**Anarchism**, p. 109]

Italy was *"paralysed, with half a million workers occupying their factories and raising red and black flags over them."* The movement spread throughout Italy, not only in the industrial heartland around Milan, Turin and Genoa, but also in Rome, Florence, Naples and Palermo. The *"militants of the USI were certainly in the forefront of the movement,"* while **Umanita Nova** argued that *"the movement is very serious and we must do everything we can to channel it towards a massive extension."* The persistent call of the USI was for *"an extension of the movement to the whole of industry to institute their 'expropriating*

general strike.'" [Williams, **Op. Cit.**, p. 236 and pp. 243-4] Railway workers, influenced by the libertarians, refused to transport troops, workers went on strike against the orders of the reformist unions and peasants occupied the land. The anarchists whole-heartedly supported the movement, unsurprisingly as the *"occupation of the factories and the land suited perfectly our programme of action."* [Malatesta, **Op. Cit.**, p. 135] Luigi Fabbri described the occupations as having *"revealed a power in the proletariat of which it had been unaware hitherto."* [quoted by Paolo Sprinao, **The Occupation of the Factories**, p. 134]

However, after four weeks of occupation, the workers decided to leave the factories. This was because of the actions of the socialist party and the reformist trade unions. They opposed the movement and negotiated with the state for a return to "normality" in exchange for a promise to extend workers' control legally, in association with the bosses. The question of revolution was decided by a vote of the CGL national council in Milan on April 10-11th, without consulting the syndicalist unions, after the Socialist Party leadership refused to decide one way or the other.

Needless to say, this promise of "workers' control" was not kept. The lack of independent inter-factory organisation made workers dependent on trade union bureaucrats for information on what was going on in other cities, and they used that power to isolate factories, cities, and factories from each other. This lead to a return to work, *"in spite of the opposition of individual anarchists dispersed among the factories."* [Malatesta, **Op. Cit.**, p. 136] The local syndicalist union confederations could not provide the necessary framework for a fully co-ordinated occupation movement as the reformist unions refused to work with them; and although the anarchists were a large minority, they were still a minority:

> *"At the 'interproletarian' convention held on 12 September (in which the Unione Anarchia, the*

The full extent of this historic revolution cannot be covered here. It will be discussed in more detail in Section I.8 of the FAQ. All that can be done is to highlight a few points of special interest in the hope that these will give some indication of the importance of these events and encourage people to find out more about it.

All industry in Catalonia was placed either under workers' self-management **or** workers' control (that is, either totally taking over **all** aspects of management, in the first case, or, in the second, controlling the old management). In some cases, whole town and regional economies were transformed into federations of collectives. The example of the Railway Federation (which was set up to manage the railway lines in Catalonia, Aragon and Valencia) can be given as a typical example. The base of the federation was the local assemblies:

> *"All the workers of each locality would meet twice a week to examine all that pertained to the work to be done… The local general assembly named a committee to manage the general activity in each station and its annexes. At [these] meetings, the decisions (direccion) of this committee, whose members continued to work [at their previous jobs], would be subjected to the approval or disapproval of the workers, after giving reports and answering questions."*

The delegates on the committee could be removed by an assembly at any time and the highest co-ordinating body of the Railway Federation was the ***"Revolutionary Committee,"*** whose members were elected by union assemblies in the various divisions. The control over the rail lines, according to Gaston Leval, *"did not operate from above downwards, as in a statist and centralised system. The Revolutionary Committee had no such powers. . . The members of the. . . committee being content to supervise the general activity and to co-ordinate that*

George Orwell's eye-witness account of revolutionary Barcelona in late December, 1936, gives a vivid picture of the social transformation that had begun:

> *"The Anarchists were still in virtual control of Catalonia and the revolution was still in full swing. To anyone who had been there since the beginning it probably seemed even in December or January that the revolutionary period was ending; but when one came straight from England the aspect of Barcelona was something startling and overwhelming. It was the first time that I had ever been in a town where the working class was in the saddle. Practically every building of any size had been seized by the workers and was draped with red flags or with the red and black flag of the Anarchists; every wall was scrawled with the hammer and sickle and with the initials of the revolutionary parties; almost every church had been gutted and its images burnt. Churches here and there were being systematically demolished by gangs of workman. Every shop and cafe had an inscription saying that it had been collectivised; even the bootblacks had been collectivised and their boxes painted red and black. Waiters and shop-walkers looked you in the face and treated you as an equal. Servile and even ceremonial forms of speech had temporarily disappeared. Nobody said 'Señor' or 'Don' or even 'Usted'; everyone called everyone else 'Comrade' or 'Thou', and said 'Salud!' instead of 'Buenos dias'. . . Above all, there was a belief in the revolution and the future, a feeling of having suddenly emerged into an era of equality and freedom. Human beings were trying to behave as human beings and not as cogs in the capitalist machine."* [**Homage to Catalonia**, pp. 2-3]

> *railwaymen's and maritime workers union participated) the syndicalist union decided that 'we cannot do it ourselves' without the socialist party and the CGL, protested against the 'counter-revolutionary vote' of Milan, declared it minoritarian, arbitrary and null, and ended by launching new, vague, but ardent calls to action."* [Paolo Spriano, **Op. Cit.**, p. 94]

Malatesta addressed the workers of one of the factories at Milan. He argued that *"[t]hose who celebrate the agreement signed at Rome [between the Confederazione and the capitalists] as a great victory of yours are deceiving you. The victory in reality belongs to Giolitti, to the government and the bourgeoisie who are saved from the precipice over which they were hanging."* During the occupation the *"bourgeoisie trembled, the government was powerless to face the situation."* Therefore:

> *"To speak of victory when the Roman agreement throws you back under bourgeois exploitation which you could have got rid of is a lie. If you give up the factories, do this with the conviction [of] hav[ing] lost a great battle and with the firm intention to resume the struggle on the first occasion and to carry it on in a thorough way. . . Nothing is lost if you have no illusion [about] the deceiving character of the victory. The famous decree on the control of factories is a mockery . . . because it tends to harmonise your interests and those of the bourgeois which is like harmonising the interests of the wolf and the sheep. Don't believe those of your leaders who make fools of you by adjourning the revolution from day to day. You yourselves must make the revolution when an occasion will offer itself, without waiting for orders which never*

> *come, or which come only to enjoin you to abandon action. Have confidence in yourselves, have faith in your future and you will win."* [quoted by Max Nettlau, **Errico Malatesta: The Biography of an Anarchist**]

Malatesta was proven correct. With the end of the occupations, the only victors were the bourgeoisie and the government. Soon the workers would face Fascism, but first, in October 1920, *"after the factories were evacuated,"* the government (obviously knowing who the real threat was) *"arrested the entire leadership of the USI and UAI. The socialists did not respond"* and *"more-or-less ignored the persecution of the libertarians until the spring of 1921 when the aged Malatesta and other imprisoned anarchists mounted a hunger strike from their cells in Milan."* [Carl Levy, **Op. Cit.**, pp. 221-2] They were acquitted after a four day trial.

The events of 1920 show four things. Firstly, that workers can manage their own workplaces successfully by themselves, without bosses. Secondly, on the need for anarchists to be involved in the labour movement. Without the support of the USI, the Turin movement would have been even more isolated than it was. Thirdly, anarchists need to be organised to influence the class struggle. The growth of the UAI and USI in terms of both influence and size indicates the importance of this. Without the anarchists and syndicalists raising the idea of factory occupations and supporting the movement, it is doubtful that it would have been as successful and widespread as it was. Lastly, that socialist organisations, structured in a hierarchical fashion, do not produce a revolutionary membership. By continually looking to leaders, the movement was crippled and could not develop to its full potential.

This period of Italian history explains the growth of Fascism in Italy. As Tobias Abse points out, *"the rise of fascism in Italy cannot be detached from the events of the **biennio rosso**, the two*

contrary to what lots of socialists, communists, liberals and other wanted to believe." The revolution of 1936 was *"based on three generations of experiment and thought and work which extended anarchist ideas to very large parts of the population."* [**Radical Priorities**, p. 212]

Due to this anarchist organising and agitation, Spain in the 1930's had the largest anarchist movement in the world. At the start of the Spanish "Civil" war, over one and one half million workers and peasants were members of the CNT (the ***National Confederation of Labour***), an anarcho-syndicalist union federation, and 30,000 were members of the FAI (the ***Anarchist Federation of Iberia***). The total population of Spain at this time was 24 million.

The social revolution which met the Fascist coup on July 18th, 1936, is the greatest experiment in libertarian socialism to date. Here the last mass syndicalist union, the CNT, not only held off the fascist rising but encouraged the widespread takeover of land and factories. Over seven million people, including about two million CNT members, put self-management into practise in the most difficult of circumstances and actually improved both working conditions and output.

In the heady days after the 19th of July, the initiative and power truly rested in the hands of the rank-and-file members of the CNT and FAI. It was ordinary people, undoubtedly under the influence of Faistas (members of the FAI) and CNT militants, who, after defeating the fascist uprising, got production, distribution and consumption started again (under more egalitarian arrangements, of course), as well as organising and volunteering (in their tens of thousands) to join the militias, which were to be sent to free those parts of Spain that were under Franco. In every possible way the working class of Spain were creating by their own actions a new world based on their own ideas of social justice and freedom – ideas inspired, of course, by anarchism and anarchosyndicalism.

[**Op. Cit.**, p. 77, p. 53 and p. 51] If we do look at the membership of the USI, rather than finding a group which *"mostly went over to fascism,"* we discover a group of people who fought fascism tooth and nail and were subject to extensive fascist violence.

To summarise, Italian Fascism had nothing to do with syndicalism and, as seen above, the USI fought the Fascists and was destroyed by them along with the UAI, Socialist Party and other radicals. That a handful of pre-war Marxist-syndicalists later became Fascists and called for a "National-Syndicalism" does not mean that syndicalism and fascism are related (any more than some anarchists later becoming Marxists makes anarchism "a vehicle" for Marxism!).

It is hardly surprising that anarchists were the most consistent and successful opponents of Fascism. The two movements could not be further apart, one standing for total statism in the service of capitalism while the other for a free, non-capitalist society. Neither is it surprising that when their privileges and power were in danger, the capitalists and the landowners turned to fascism to save them. This process is a common feature in history (to list just four examples, Italy, Germany, Spain and Chile).

A.5.6 Anarchism and the Spanish Revolution

As Noam Chomsky notes, *"a good example of a really large-scale anarchist revolution – in fact the best example to my knowledge – is the Spanish revolution in 1936, in which over most of Republican Spain there was a quite inspiring anarchist revolution that involved both industry and agriculture over substantial areas . . . And that again was, by both human measures and indeed anyone's economic measures, quite successful. That is, production continued effectively; workers in farms and factories proved quite capable of managing their affairs without coercion from above,*

red years of 1919 and 1920, that preceded it. Fascism was a preventive counter-revolution . . . launched as a result of the failed revolution" [*"The Rise of Fascism in an Industrial City"*, pp. 52-81, **Rethinking Italian Fascism**, David Forgacs (ed.), p. 54] The term *"preventive counter-revolution"* was originally coined by the leading anarchist Luigi Fabbri, who correctly described fascism as *"the organisation and agent of the violent armed defence of the ruling class against the proletariat, which, to their mind, has become unduly demanding, united and intrusive."* [*"Fascism: The Preventive Counter-Revolution"*, pp. 408-416, **Anarchism**, Robert Graham (ed.), p. 410 and p. 409]

The rise of fascism confirmed Malatesta's warning at the time of the factory occupations: *"If we do not carry on to the end, we will pay with tears of blood for the fear we now instil in the bourgeoisie."* [quoted by Tobias Abse, **Op. Cit.**, p. 66] The capitalists and rich landowners backed the fascists in order to teach the working class their place, aided by the state. They ensured *"that it was given every assistance in terms of funding and arms, turning a blind eye to its breaches of the law and, where necessary, covering its back through intervention by armed forces which, on the pretext of restoring order, would rush to the aid of the fascists wherever the latter were beginning to take a beating instead of doling one out."* [Fabbri, **Op. Cit.**, p. 411] To quote Tobias Abse:

> *"The aims of the Fascists and their backers amongst the industrialists and agrarians in 1921-22 were simple: to break the power of the organised workers and peasants as completely as possible, to wipe out, with the bullet and the club, not only the gains of the **biennio rosso**, but everything that the lower classes had gained . . . between the turn of the century and the outbreak of the First World War."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 54]

The fascist squads attacked and destroyed anarchist and socialist meeting places, social centres, radical presses and Camera del Lavoro (local trade union councils). However, even in the dark days of fascist terror, the anarchists resisted the forces of totalitarianism. *"It is no coincidence that the strongest working-class resistance to Fascism was in . . . towns or cities in which there was quite a strong anarchist, syndicalist or anarcho-syndicalist tradition."* [Tobias Abse, **Op. Cit.**, p. 56]

The anarchists participated in, and often organised sections of, the **Arditi del Popolo**, a working-class organisation devoted to the self-defence of workers' interests. The Arditi del Popolo organised and encouraged working-class resistance to fascist squads, often defeating larger fascist forces (for example, *"the total humiliation of thousands of Italo Balbo's squadristi by a couple of hundred Arditi del Popolo backed by the inhabitants of the working class districts"* in the anarchist stronghold of Parma in August 1922 [Tobias Abse, **Op. Cit.**, p. 56]).

The Arditi del Popolo was the closest Italy got to the idea of a united, revolutionary working-class front against fascism, as had been suggested by Malatesta and the UAI. This movement *"developed along anti-bourgeois and anti-fascist lines, and was marked by the independence of its local sections."* [**Red Years, Black Years: Anarchist Resistance to Fascism in Italy**, p. 2] Rather than being just an "anti-fascist" organisation, the Arditi *"were not a movement in defence of 'democracy' in the abstract, but an essentially working-class organisation devoted to the defence of the interests of industrial workers, the dockers and large numbers of artisans and craftsmen."* [Tobias Abse, **Op. Cit.**, p. 75] Unsurprisingly, the **Arditi del Popolo** *"appear to have been strongest and most successful in areas where traditional working-class political culture was less exclusively socialist and had strong anarchist or syndicalist traditions, for example, Bari, Livorno, Parma and Rome."* [Antonio Sonnessa, *"Working Class Defence Organisation, Anti-Fascist Resistance*

and state that this shows that the *"Italian syndicalists mostly went over to Fascism"* staggers belief. What is even worse, as seen above, the Italian anarchists and syndicalists were the most dedicated and successful fighters against fascism. In effect, Black and Sabatini have slandered a whole movement.

What is also interesting is that these "leading syndicalists" were not anarchists and so not anarcho-syndicalists. As Roberts notes *"[i]n Italy, the syndicalist doctrine was more clearly the product of a group of intellectuals, operating within the Socialist party and seeking an alternative to reformism."* They *"explicitly denounced anarchism"* and *"insisted on a variety of Marxist orthodoxy."* The *"syndicalists genuinely desired – and tried – to work within the Marxist tradition."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 66, p. 72, p. 57 and p. 79] According to Carl Levy, in his account of Italian anarchism, *"[u]nlike other syndicalist movements, the Italian variation coalesced inside a Second International party. Supporter were partially drawn from socialist intransigents . . . the southern syndicalist intellectuals pronounced republicanism . . . Another component . . . was the remnant of the Partito Operaio."* [*"Italian Anarchism: 1870-1926"* in **For Anarchism: History, Theory, and Practice**, David Goodway (Ed.), p. 51]

In other words, the Italian syndicalists who turned to fascism were, firstly, a small minority of intellectuals who could not convince the majority within the syndicalist union to follow them, and, secondly, Marxists and republicans rather than anarchists, anarcho-syndicalists or even revolutionary syndicalists.

According to Carl Levy, Roberts' book *"concentrates on the syndicalist intelligentsia"* and that *"some syndicalist intellectuals . . . helped generate, or sympathetically endorsed, the new Nationalist movement . . . which bore similarities to the populist and republican rhetoric of the southern syndicalist intellectuals."* He argues that there *"has been far too much emphasis on syndicalist intellectuals and national organisers"* and that syndicalism *"relied little on its national leadership for its long-term vitality."*

Given this history of resisting fascism in Italy, it is surprising that some claim Italian fascism was a product or form of syndicalism. This is even claimed by some anarchists. According to Bob Black the *"Italian syndicalists mostly went over to Fascism"* and references David D. Roberts 1979 study **The Syndicalist Tradition and Italian Fascism** to support his claim. [**Anarchy after Leftism**, p. 64] Peter Sabatini in a review in **Social Anarchism** makes a similar statement, saying that syndicalism's *"ultimate failure"* was *"its transformation into a vehicle of fascism."* [**Social Anarchism**, no. 23, p. 99] What is the truth behind these claims?

Looking at Black's reference we discover that, in fact, most of the Italian syndicalists did not go over to fascism, if by syndicalists we mean members of the USI (the Italian Syndicalist Union). Roberts states that:

> *"The vast majority of the organised workers failed to respond to the syndicalists' appeals and continued to oppose [Italian] intervention [in the First World War], shunning what seemed to be a futile capitalist war. The syndicalists failed to convince even a majority within the USI . . . the majority opted for the neutralism of Armando Borghi, leader of the anarchists within the USI. Schism followed as De Ambris led the interventionist minority out of the confederation."* [**The Syndicalist Tradition and Italian Fascism**, p. 113]

However, if we take "syndicalist" to mean some of the intellectuals and "leaders" of the pre-war movement, it was a case that the *"leading syndicalists came out for intervention quickly and almost unanimously"* [Roberts, **Op. Cit.**, p. 106] after the First World War started. Many of these pro-war "leading syndicalists" did become fascists. However, to concentrate on a handful of "leaders" (which the majority did not even follow!)

*and the **Arditi del Popolo** in Turin, 1919-22,"* pp. 183-218, **European History Quarterly**, vol. 33, no. 2, p. 184]

However, both the socialist and communist parties withdrew from the organisation. The socialists signed a "Pact of Pacification" with the Fascists in August 1921. The communists *"preferred to withdraw their members from the Arditi del Popolo rather than let them work with the anarchists."* [**Red Years, Black Years**, p. 17] Indeed, *"[o]n the same day as the Pact was signed, **Ordine Nuovo** published a PCd'I [Communist Party of Italy] communication warning communists against involvement"* in the Arditi del Popolo. Four days later, the Communist leadership *"officially abandoned the movement. Severe disciplinary measures were threatened against those communists who continued to participate in, or liase with,"* the organisation. Thus by *"the end of the first week of August 1921 the PSI, CGL and the PCd'I had officially denounced"* the organisation. *"Only the anarchist leaders, if not always sympathetic to the programme of the [Arditi del Popolo], did not abandon the movement."* Indeed, **Umanita Nova** *"strongly supported"* it *"on the grounds it represented a popular expression of anti-fascist resistance and in defence of freedom to organise."* [Antonio Sonnessa, **Op. Cit.**, p. 195 and p. 194]

However, in spite of the decisions by their leaders, many rank and file socialists and communists took part in the movement. The latter took part in open *"defiance of the PCd'I leadership's growing abandonment"* of it. In Turin, for example, communists who took part in the **Arditi del Polopo** did so *"less as communists and more as part of a wider, working-class self-identification . . . This dynamic was re-enforced by an important socialist and anarchist presence"* there. The failure of the Communist leadership to support the movement shows the bankruptcy of Bolshevik organisational forms which were unresponsive to the needs of the popular movement. Indeed, these events show the *"libertarian custom of autonomy from, and resistance to, authority was also operated against the leaders*

of the workers' movement, particularly when they were held to have misunderstood the situation at grass roots level." [Sonnessa, **Op. Cit.**, p. 200, p. 198 and p. 193]

Thus the Communist Party failed to support the popular resistance to fascism. The Communist leader Antonio Gramsci explained why, arguing that *"the party leadership's attitude on the question of the Arditi del Popolo . . . corresponded to a need to prevent the party members from being controlled by a leadership that was not the party's leadership."* Gramsci added that this policy *"served to disqualify a mass movement which had started from below and which could instead have been exploited by us politically."* [**Selections from Political Writings (1921-1926)**, p. 333] While being less sectarian towards the Arditi del Popolo than other Communist leaders, *"[i]n common with all communist leaders, Gramsci awaited the formation of the PCd'I-led military squads."* [Sonnessa, **Op. Cit.**, p. 196] In other words, the struggle against fascism was seen by the Communist leadership as a means of gaining more members and, when the opposite was a possibility, they preferred defeat and fascism rather than risk their followers becoming influenced by anarchism.

As Abse notes, *"it was the withdrawal of support by the Socialist and Communist parties at the national level that crippled"* the Arditi. [**Op. Cit.**, p. 74] Thus *"social reformist defeatism and communist sectarianism made impossible an armed opposition that was widespread and therefore effective; and the isolated instances of popular resistance were unable to unite in a successful strategy."* And fascism could have been defeated: *"Insurrections at Sarzanna, in July 1921, and at Parma, in August 1922, are examples of the correctness of the policies which the anarchists urged in action and propaganda."* [**Red Years, Black Years**, p. 3 and p. 2] Historian Tobias Abse confirms this analysis, arguing that *"[w]hat happened in Parma in August 1922 . . . could have happened elsewhere, if only the leadership of the Socialist and Communist parties thrown their weight behind the call of the anarchist Malatesta for a united revolutionary front against Fascism."* [**Op. Cit.**, p. 56]

In the end, fascist violence was successful and capitalist power maintained:

> *"The anarchists' will and courage were not enough to counter the fascist gangs, powerfully aided with material and arms, backed by the repressive organs of the state. Anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists were decisive in some areas and in some industries, but only a similar choice of direct action on the parts of the Socialist Party and the General Confederation of Labour [the reformist trade union] could have halted fascism."* [**Red Years, Black Years**, pp. 1-2]

After helping to defeat the revolution, the Marxists helped ensure the victory of fascism.

Even after the fascist state was created, anarchists resisted both inside and outside Italy. In America, for example, Italian anarchists played a major role in fighting fascist influence in their communities, none more so that Carlo Tresca, most famous for his role in the 1912 IWW Lawrence strike, who *"in the 1920s had no peer among anti-Fascist leaders, a distinction recognised by Mussolini's political police in Rome."* [Nunzio Pernicone, **Carlo Tresca: Portrait of a Rebel**, p. 4] Many Italians, both anarchist and non-anarchist, travelled to Spain to resist Franco in 1936 (see Umberto Marzochhi's **Remembering Spain: Italian Anarchist Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War** for details). During the Second World War, anarchists played a major part in the Italian Partisan movement. It was the fact that the anti-fascist movement was dominated by anti-capitalist elements that led the USA and the UK to place known fascists in governmental positions in the places they "liberated" (often where the town had already been taken by the Partisans, resulting in the Allied troops "liberating" the town from its own inhabitants!).