Sam Dolgoff
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could annihilate humanity. While the anarchists never underestimated the great importance of the economic factor in social change, they nevertheless rejected fanatical economic fatalism. One of the most cogent contributions of anarchism to social theory is the proper emphasis on how political institutions in turn mold economic life. Equally significant is the importance attached to the will of man, his aspirations, the moral factor, and, above all, the spirit of revolt in the shaping of human history. In this area too, anarchism is particularly relevant to the renewal of society. To indicate the importance attached to this factor, we quote a passage from a letter that Bakunin wrote to his friend Elisee Reclus:

> [T]he hour of revolution is passed, not because of the frightful disaster [the Franco-Prussian War and the slaughter of the Paris communards in May 1871] but because, to my great despair, I have found it a fact, and I am finding it every day anew, that revolutionary hope, passion, are absolutely lacking in the masses; and when these are absent, it is vain to make desperate efforts . . .

The availability of more and more consumer goods plus the sophisticated techniques of mass indoctrination has corrupted the public mind. [Middle-class conditioning] has sapped the revolutionary vitality of the masses. It is precisely this divorce from the inspiring values of socialism, which, to a large extent, accounts for the venality and corruption in modern labor and socialist movements. To forge a revolutionary movement which, inspired by anarchist ideas, would be capable of reversing this reactionary trend, is a task of staggering proportions. But therein lies the true relevance of anarchism.

up any possible monopoly by a minority and eliminate the threat of dictatorship. "The number of scientists and techologists in this country has doubled in little more than ten years and now forms 20% of the labor force — this growth is much faster than that of the population . . ."[29] The second check to dictatorship [of the scientific/technical elite] is not to invest specialists or any other group with political power to rule over others. While we must ceaselessly guard against the abuse of power, we must never forget that in the joint effort to build a better world, we much also learn to trust each other. If we do not, then this better world will forever remain a utopia.

The True Relevance Of Anarchism

I have tried to show that anarchism is not a panacea that will miraculously cure all the ills of the body social, but rather, a [modern] guide to action based on a realistic conception of social reconstruction. The well-nigh insuperable material obstacle to the introduction of anarchism — scarcity of goods and services and excessive industrial-managerial centralization — have or can be removed by the cybernetic-technical revolution. Yet, the movement for emancipation is threatened by the far more formidable political, social, and brain-washing techniques of "The Establishment". In their polemics with marxists, anarchists insisted that the political state subjects the economy to its own ends. A highly sophisticated economic system, once viewed as the prerequisite for the realization of socialism, now serves to reinforce the domination of the ruling classes with the technology of physical and mental repression and the ensuing obliteration of human values. The very abundance which can liberate [humanity] from want and drudgery, now enables the state to establish what is in effect a nationalized poorhouse, in which the millions of technologically unemployed — forgotten, faceless outcasts on public "welfare" — will be given only enough to keep them quiet. The very technology that has opened new roads to freedom has also armed states with unimaginably frightful weapons which

[29] *New York Times,* December 29, 1970.

Bourgeois Neo-Anarchism

Meaningful discussion about the relevance of anarchist ideas to modern industrialized societies must first, for the sake of clarity, outline the difference between today's "neo-anarchism" and the classical anarchism of Proudhon, Kroptkin, Malatesta and their successors. With rare exceptions one is stuck by the mediocre and superficial character of the ideas advanced by modern writers on anarchism. Instead of presenting fresh insights, there is the repetition of utopisitic ideas which the anarchist movement had long since outgrown and rejected as totally irrelevant to the problems of our increasingly complex society. Many of the ideas which the noted anarchist writer Luigi Fabbri a half century ago labeled "Bourgeois Influence in Anarchism" are again in circulation.[1] For example, there is Kingsley Widmer's article, "Anarchism Revived — Right, Left and All Around." Like similar bourgeois movements in the past, Widmer correctly points out:

> Anarchism's contemporary revival . . . mostly comes from the dissident middle class intellectuals, students and other marginal groups who base themselves on individualist, utopian and other non-working class aspects of anarchism . . .[2]

Other typical bougeois anarchist characteristics are: *Escapism:* the hope that the establishment will be gradually undermined if enough people 'cop-out' of the system and "live like anarchsts in communes and other life-style institutions . . ." *Nechayevism*: romantic glorification of conspiracy, ruthlessness, and violence in the amoral tradition of Nechayev. *Boehmianism:* total irresponsibility; exclusive preoccupation with one's picturesque "life-style"; exhibitionism; rejection of any form of organization or self-discipline. *Anti-Social Individualism:* the urge to "idealize" the most anti-social forms of individual forms of individual rebellion," according to Fabbri. Malatesta writes:

[1] *Bourgeois Influences on Anarchism,* by Luigi Fabbri. Tuscon, AZ: See Sharp Press, 2001.

[2] *The Nation,* November 16, 1970.

> [I]ntolerance of oppression, the desire to be free and develop one personality to its full limits, is not enough to make one an anarchist. That aspiration towards unlimited freedom, if not tempered by a love for mankind and by the desire that all should enjoy equal freedom, may well create rebels who . . . soon become exploiters and tyrants . . . [3]

Still other neo-anarchists are obsessed with "action for the sake of action." One of the foremost historians of Italian anarchism, Pier Carlo Masini, notes that for them "spontaneity" is the panacea that will automatically solve all problems. No theoretical or practical preparation is needed. In the "revolution" that is "just around the corner" the fundamental differences between libertarians and our mortal enemies, authoritarian groups like the Marxist-Leinists, will miraculously vanish. Masini observes:

> Paradoxically enough, the really modern anarchists are those with white hair, those who guided by the teachings of Bakunin and Malatesta, who in Italy and in Spain (as well as in Russia) had learned from bitter personal participation how serious matter a revolution can be . . . [4]

It is not our intention to belittle the many fine things the scholars do say, nor to downgrade the magnificent struggles of our young rebels against was, racism and the false values of that vast crime, "The Establishment" — struggles which sparked the revival of the long dormant radical movement. But they stress the negative aspects and ignore or misinterpret the constructive principles of anarchism. Bakunin and the classical anarchists always emphasized the necessity for constructive thinking and action:

> [The 1848 revolutionary movement] was rich in instincts and negative theoretical ideas which gave it full justification for its fight against privilege, but it lacked completely any positive and practical ideas which would have been needed to enable

[3] *Malatesta: Life and Ideas.* London: Freedom Press, 1965, p. 24
[4] Quoted in a letter to a friend.

at every level, consumers will make their wants known and be supplied by the producers. The innumerable variety of supermarkets, chain stores, and service centers of every description now blanketing the country, though owned by corporations or privately, are so structured that they could be easily socialized and converted into cooperative networks. In general, the same holds true for production, exchange, and other branches of the economy. The integration of these economic organisms will undoubtedly be greatly facilitated because the same people are both producers and consumers. The progress of the new society will depend greatly upon the extent to which its self-governing units will be able to speed up direct communication — to understand each other's problems and better coordinate activities. Thanks to modern communications technology, all the essential facilities are now available: tape libraries, computer [networks], closed-circuit television and telephone systems, communications satellites and a plethora of other devices are making instant, direct communication on a world scale accessible to all (visual and radio contact between earth and moon within seconds!). Face-to-face democracy — a cornerstone of a free society, is already foreshadowed by the increasing mobility of peoples. There is an exaggerated fear that a minority of scientific and technical workers would, in a free society, set up a dictatorship over the rest of society. They certainly do not now wield the power generally attributed to them. In spite of their "higher" status, they are no less immune to the fluctuation of the economic system than are the "ordinary" workers. Like lower-paid workers, they too must, on pain of dismissal, obey the orders of their employers. Tens of thousands of frustrated, first-rate technical and scientific employees, not permitted to exercise their knowledge creatively, find themselves trapped in monotonous, useless, and anti-social tasks. And nothing is more maddening than to stand helplessly by while ignoramuses who do not even understand the language of science, dictate the direction of research and development. Nor are these workers free to exercise these rights in Russia, or anywhere else. In addition to these general consideration, there are two other preventative checks to dictatorship of the techno-scientific elite. The first is that the wider diffusion of scientific and technical training, providing millions of new specialists, would break

(corporate centralized industry) to accommodate itself to changing tasks has been visibly deficient operations . . . The larger and more complex organizations are, the more they must be decentralized . . . [27]

One of the major obstacles to the establishment of the free society is the cumbersome, all pervasive, corporate-statist apparatus manned by an entrenched bureaucratic elite class of administrators, managers, and officials who at all levels exercise de facto control over the operations of society. This has up till now been regarded as an unavoidable evil, but thanks to the development of computerized technology, this byzantine apparatus can now be dismantled. Alan Toffler, summing up the evidence, concludes that "far from fastening the grip of bureaucracy on civilization more than before, automation leads to its overthrow . . . "[28] Another source, quoting *Business Week*, concludes that:

[A]utomation not only makes economic planning necessary — it also makes it possible. The calculations required for planning on nationwide scale are complicated and difficult, but they can be performed by the new electronic computers in an amazingly short time . . .

The libertarian principle of workers' control will not be invalidated by changes in the composition of the work force or in the nature of work itself. With or without automation, the economic structure of the new society must be based on self-administration by the people directly involved in economic functions. Under automation millions of highly trained technicians, engineers, scientists, educators, etc., who are already organized into local, regional, national, and international federations will freely circulate information, constantly improving both the quality and availability of goods and services and developing new products for new needs. By closely intermeshing and greatly expanding the already existing networks of consumer cooperative associations with the producer associations

[27] *The New Industrial State.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1967.
[28] *Future Shock,* by Alvin Toffler, 1970, p. 141.

it to erect a new system upon the ruins of the old bourgeois setup . . . [5]

Lacking such solid foundations, such movements must eventually disintegrate.

Distorting Anarchist Ideas

Some works on anarchism, like George Woodcock's *Anarchism* and the two books by Horowitz and Joll — both titled *Anarchism* — perpetuate the myth that the anarchist are living antiques, visionaries yearning to return to an idyllic past. According to Woodcock, "[T]he historical anarchist movement that sprang from Bakunin and his followers is dead," and the cardinal principles of classical anarchism — economic and political decentralization of power, individual and local autonomy, self-management of industry ("workers control") and federalism are "obsolete forms of organization [running counter] to the world-wide trend toward political and economic centralization. . . . The real social revolution of the modern age is in fact the process of centralization toward which every development of scientific and technological progress has contributed . . . the anarchist movement failed to present an alternative to the state or the capitalist economy."[6] It is hard to understand how scholars even slightly acquainted with the vast libertarian literature on social reconstruction come to such absurd conclusions! A notable exception is the French sociologist-historian Daniel Guerin whose excellent little book, *L'anarchisme*, has been translated into English with an introduction by Noam Chomsky and published in the Monthly Review Press. Guerin concentrates on the constructive aspects of anarchism. While not without its faults — he underestimates the importance of Kropotkin's ideas and exaggerates Stirner's — it is still the best short introduction to the subject. Guerin effectively refutes the arguments

[5] *Federalism, Socialism, Anti-Theologism.*
[6] *Anarchism,* by George Woodcock. Cleveland, OH: World Publishing, 1962, pp. 469, 473.

of recent historians, particularly Jean Maitron, Woodcock and Joll concluding that:

> [Their] image of anarchism is not true. Constructive anarchism which found its most accomplished expression in the writings of Bakunin, relies on organization, on self-discipline, on integration, on a centralization which is not coercive, but federalist. It relates to large scale industry, to modern technology, to the modern proletariat, to genuine internationalism. . . . In the modern world the material, intellectual and moral interests have created between all parts of a nation and even different nations, a real and solid unity, and this unity will survive all states . . .[7]

To assess the extent to which classical anarchism is applicable to modern societies it is first necessary to summarize briefly its leading constructive tenets.

Complex Societies Necessitate Anarchism

It is a fallacy to assume that anarchists ignore the complexity of social life. On the contrary, the classical anarchists have always rejected the kind of "simplicity" which camouflages regimentation in favor of the natural complexity which reflects the many faceted richness and diversity of social and individual life. The cybernetic mathematician John B. McEwan, writing on the relevance of anarchism to cybernetics explains:

> Libertarian socialists, synonym for non-indvidualist anarchis[ts], especially Kropotkin and Landauer, showed an early grasp of the complex network of changing relationships, involving many structures of correlated activity and mutual aid, independent of authoritarian coercion. It was against this background that they developed their theories of social organization . . .[8]

[7] *L'Anarchisme,* by Daniel Guerin. Paris: Gallimard, 1965, pp. 180–181

[8] *Anarchy,* #25, March 1963. (The journal edited by Colin Ward)

> field of the electronic revolution this pattern of decentralization appears in multiple guises . . .[24]

Franz Schurman, *in The New American Revolution*, 1971, advocates an "anarcho-syndicalist solution based on decentralized associations." Christopher Lasch, discussing R.A. Dahl's *Authority in the Good Society* writes:

> Self-management will transform corporate employees from corporate subjects to citizens of the enterprise . . . Self-management will not be introduced from above but from below . . . He [Dahl] . . . denies that workers will not be able to run industry in the interest of society.[25]

The reviewers of John M. Blair's critique of economic centralization find that Blair's researches are most impressive in debunking the myth that large scale, centralized enterprises are more efficient [than small-scale, decentralized enterprises]: [T]he largest railroad in America, Penn Central, couldn't keep track of its boxcars . . . The most successful of all industrial behemoths, General Motors, long ago decentralized its operations; only the profits are concentrated.[26] Blair's point is re-enforced by a will-known English economist, E. F. Schumacher, in *Small Is Beautiful:* "The achievement of Sloan and General Motors was to structure the gigantic firm in such a manner that it became, in fact, a federation of reasonably sized firms . . ." John Kenneth Galbraith, in *The New Industrial State*, wrote:

> In giant industrial corporations autonomy is necessary for both and small decisions and . . . large questions of policy . . . [T]he comparative advantages of atomic [energy] . . . for the generation of electricity are decided by a variety of scientists, technical, economic, and planning judgments. Only a committee, or more precisely, a complex of committees, can combine the knowledge and experience that must be brought to bear . . . The effect of the denial of autonomy and the inability of the technostructure

[24] *Understanding Media,* by Marshall McLuhan, pp. 47–48, 225.

[25] *New York Review of Books,* October 21, 1971.

[26] *New York Times Book Review,* September 10, 1972.

Automation Could Expedite Anarchism

We consider that the constructive ideas of anarchism are rendered even more timely by the cybernetic revolution still in its early stages, and will become increasingly more relevant as this revolution unfolds. There are, even now, no insurmountable technical-scientific barriers to the introduction of anarchism. The greatest material drawback to the realization of the ideal of "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs " has been the scarcity of goods and services. "Cybernation, a system of almost unlimited productive capacity which requires progressively less human labor . . . would make possible the abolition of poverty at home and abroad. . . ."[23] In a consumer economy where purchasing power is not tied to production, the wage system becomes obsolete and the preconditions for the realization of the socialist ideal immeasurably enhanced. When Kropotkin in 1899 wrote his *Fields, Factories and Workshops*, to demonstrate the feasibility of decentralizing industry to achieve a greater balance between rural and urban living, his ideas were dismissed as premature. It is now no longer disputed that the problem of scaling down industry to manageable human proportions, rendered even more acute by the pollution threatening the very existence of life on this planet, can now be largely solved by modern technology. There is now an enormous amount of literature on this topic. (Murray Bookchin has done an enormous amount of research on this topic — see, for example, his *Post-Scarcity Anarchism.*) The following are excerpts from a few works on the subject:

> Electricity does not centralize but decentralize . . . Electric power, equally available in the farmhouse and the executive suite, permits any place to be a center, and does not require large aggregations . . . [A]irplane[s] and radio permit the utmost continuity and diversity in spatial organization . . . [B]y electricity, we everywhere resume person-to-person relations on the smallest village scale . . . It is a relation in depth, and without delegation of functions and powers . . . In the whole

[23] "Manifesto," by Committee for the Triple Revolution, quoted in *Liberation,* April 1964.

One of Proudhon's greatest contributions to anarchist theory and socialism in general was the idea that the very complexity of social life demands the decentralization and autonomy of communities. Proudhon maintained that "through the complexity of interests and the progress of ideas, society is forced to abjure the state . . . beneath the apparatus of government, under the shadow of its political institutions, society was slowly and silently producing its organization, make for itself a new order which expressed its vitality and autonomy . . ."[9] Like his predecessors, Proudhon and Bakunin, Kropotkin elaborated the idea that the very complexity of social life demanded the decentralization and self-management of industry by the workers. From his studies of economic life in England and Scotland he concluded:

> [P]roduction and exchange represented an undertaking so complicated that no government (without establishing a cumbersome, inefficient, bureaucratic dictatorship) would be able to organize production if the workers themselves, through their unions, did not do it in each branch of industry; for in all production there arises daily thousands of difficulties that . . . no government can hope to foresee . . . Only the efforts of thousands of intelligences working on problems can cooperate in the development of the new social system and find solutions for the thousands of local needs.[10]

Decentralization and autonomy does not mean the breakup of society into small, isolated, economically self-sufficient groups, which is neither possible nor desirable. The Spanish anarchist, Diego Abad de Santillan, Ministry of the Economy in Catalonia in the early period of the Spanish Civil War (December 1936), reminded some of his comrades:

> Once and for all we must realize that we are no longer . . . in a little utopian world . . . [W]e cannot realize our economic

[9] *General Idea of the Revolution in the 19th Century.* London: Freedom Press, 1923, p. 89.

[10] *Revolutionary Pamphlets.* New York: Vanguard Press, 1927, pp. 76–77.

> revolution in a local sense; for economy on a localist basis can only cause collective privation . . . [The] economy is today a vast organism and all isolation must prove detrimental . . . We must work with a social criterion, considering the interests of the whole country and if possible the whole world . . . [11]

A balance must be achieved between the suffocating tyranny of unbridled authority and the kind of "autonomy" that leads to petty local patriotism, separation of little grouplets, and the fragmentation of society. Libertarian organization must reflect the complexity of social relationships and promote solidarity on the widest possible scale. It can be defined as federalism: coordination through free agreement — locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally. [It consists of] a vast coordinated network of voluntary alliances embracing the totality of social life, in which all the groups and associations reap the benefits of unity while still exercising autonomy within their own spheres and expanding the range of their freedom. Anarchist organizational principles are not separate entities. Autonomy is impossible without decentralization, and decentralization is impossible without federalism. The increasing complexity of society is making anarchism *more* and *not less* relevant to modern life. It is precisely this complexity and diversity, above all their overriding concern for freedom and human values that led the anarchist thinkers to base their ideas on the principles of diffusion of power, self-management and federalism. The greatest attribute of the free society is that it is self-regulating and "bears within itself the seeds of its own regeneration" (Martin Buber) The self-governing associations will be flexible enough to adjust their differences, correct and learn from their mistakes, experiment with new, creative forms of social living and thereby achieve genuine harmony on a higher humanistic plane. Errors and conflicts confined to the limited jurisdiction of special purpose groups may do limited damage. But miscalculations and criminal decisions made by the state and other autocratically centralized organizations affecting whole nations, and even the whole world, can have the most disastrous consequences. Society without

[11] *After the Revolution.* New York: Greenberg, 1937, pp. 85, 100.

> [Mass movements need] stable organizations precisely because [they move] in a world that is only partly governed by anarchist ideals . . . [They] make compromises with day-to-day situations . . . [An anarcho-syndicalist organization] has to maintain the allegiance of masses of [workers] who are only remotely conscious of the final aim of anarchism.[22]

If these statements are true, then "pure" anarchism is a pipe dream. First, because there will never be a time when everybody will be a "pure" anarchist, and humanity will forever have to make "compromises with the day-to-day situation." Second, because the intricate economic and social operations of an interdependent world cannot be carried on without "stable organizations." Even if every inhabitant were a convinced anarchist, "pure" anarchism would still be impossible for technical and functional reasons alone. This is not to say that anarchism excludes affinity groups. Anarchism envisions a flexible, pluralist society where all the needs of mankind would be supplied by an infinite variety of voluntary associations. The world is honeycombed with affinity groups from chess clubs to anarchist propaganda groups. They are formed, dissolved, and reconstituted according to the fluctuating whims and fancies of the individuals adherents. It is precisely because they reflect individual preferences that such groups are the lifeblood of the free society. But the anarchists have also insisted that since the necessities of life and vital services must be supplied without fail and cannot be left to the whims of individuals, there are social obligations which every able bodied individual is honor bound to fulfill if he expects to enjoy the benefits of collective labor. Large scale organizations, anarchistically organized, are *not* a deviation. *They are the very essence of anarchism as a viable social order. There is no "pure" anarchism. there is only the application of anarchist principles to the realities of social living.* The aim of anarchism is to stimulate forces that propel society in a libertarian direction. It is only from this standpoint that the relevance of anarchism to modern life can be properly assessed.

[22] Woodcock, Op. Cit., pp. 273–274.

have our own solutions if we are not to be relegated to the role of useless and impotent grumblers, while the more realistic and unscrupulous authoritarians seize power. Anarchy or no anarchy, the people must eat and be provided with the necessities of life. The cities must be provisioned and vital services cannot be disrupted. Even if poorly served, the people in their own interests would not allow us or anyone else to disrupt these services unless and until they are reorganized in a better way; and this cannot be achieved in a day. The organization of the anarchist-communist society on a large scale can only be achieved gradually as material conditions permit, and as the masses convince themselves of the benefits to be gained, and as they gradually become psychologically accustomed to radical alterations in their way of life. Since free and voluntary communism (Malatesta's synonym for anarchism) cannot be imposed, Malatesta stressed the necessity for the coexistence of various economic forms, collectivist, mutualist, individualist, on the condition that there will be no exploitation of others. Malatesta was confident that the convincing example of successful libertarian collective will "attract others into the orbit of the collectivity . . . [F]or my part I do not believe that there is 'one' solution to the social problem, but a thousand different and changing solutions, in the same way as social existence is different in time and space. . . ."[21]

"Pure" Anarchism is a Fiction

Aside from the "individualists" (a very ambiguous term) none of the anarchist thinkers were "pure" anarchists. The typical "pure" anarchist grouping, explains Geirge Woodcock, "is the loose and flexible affinity group" which needs no formal organization and carries on anarchist propaganda through an "invisible network of personal contacts and intellectual influences." Woodcock argues that "pure" anarchism is incompatible with mass movements like anarcho-syndicalism:

[21] Ibid., pp. 99, 151.

order (as the word "society" implies) is inconceivable. But the organization of order is not the exclusive monopoly of the State. For, if the State authority is the sole guarantee of order, who will watch the watchmen? Federalism is also a form of order, which preceded the establishment of the State. But it is order which guarantees the freedom and independence of the individuals and associations who freely and spontaneously constitute the federations. Federalism is not like the State, born of the will to power, but is recognition of the ineluctable interdependence of mankind. Federalism springs from the will to harmony and solidarity.

Modern Industry Better Organized Anarchistically

Bourgeois economists, sociologists and administrators like Peter Druker, Gunnar Myrdal, John Kenneth Galbraith, Daniel Bell, et al., now favor a large measure of decentralization not because they suddenly became anarchists, but primarily because technology has rendered anarchistic forms of organization "operational necessities". But the bourgeois reformers have yet to learn that as long as these organizational forms are tied to state or capitalism, which connotes the monopoly of political and economic power, decentralization will remain a fraud — a more efficient device to enlist the cooperation of the masses in their own enslavement. To illustrate how their ideas inadvertently demonstrate the practicality of anarchist organization and how they contradict themselves, we cite the "free enterpriser" Drucker and the "welfare statist" Myrdal. In the chapter titled "The Sickness of Government," Drucker writes:

> Disenchantment with government cuts across national boundaries and ideological lines . . . [G]overnment itself has become one of the vested interests . . . [T]he moment government undertakes anything it becomes entrenched and permanent . . . [T]he unproductive becomes built into the political process itself . . . [S]ocial theory, to be meaningful at all, must start with the reality of pluralism of institutions, a galaxy of suns rather

> than one big center surrounded by moons that shine only by reflected light . . . a society of institutional diversity and diffusion of power . . . [I]n a pluralist society of organizations [each unit would be] limited to the specific service it renders to the member of society which it meant to perform — yet, since every institution has power in its own sphere, it would be as such, affected with the public interest . . . [S]uch a view of organizations as being autonomous and limited [is] necessary both to make the organization perform and to safeguard the individual's freedom. . . [12]

After demonstrating the "monstrosity of government, its lack of performance and its impotence," Drucker flatly contradicts himself and comes to the surprising conclusion that "never has strong, effective government been needed more than in this dangerous would . . . never more than in this pluralist society of organizations." Mydal convincingly demonstrates that both the Soviet and the "free world states" need decentralization for administrative efficiency in order that (political and economic life) shall not succumb to the rigidity of the central apparatus. But then he expects the paternalistic welfare state to loosen "its controls over everyday life" and gradually transfer most of its powers to "all sorts of organizations and communities controlled by the people themselves. . . " No anarchist [could] refute Myrdal's argument better than he does himself:

> [T]o give up autocratic patterns, to give up administrative controls and . . . withdraw willingly from intervening when it is no longer necessary, are steps which do not correspond to the inner workings of a functioning bureaucracy. . . [13]

If these advocates of decentralization and autonomy were consistent, they would realize that the diffusion of power leads to anarchism.

[12] *The Age of Discontinuity.* New York: Harper & Row, 1968, pp. 212, 217, 222 225, 226, 251, 252.

[13] *Beyond the Welfare State.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968, pp. 102, 97, 108.

Agustin Souchy, veteran anarcho-syndicalist activist, theoretician, one-time Secretary of the anarcho-syndicalist International Workingmens' Association (the anarcho-syndicalist international), and actively involved with the Spanish CNT, wrote that:

> [D]uring the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939), the Spanish workers and peasants were establishing what could be loosely called "libertarian syndicalist socialism": a system without exploitation and injustice. In this type of libertarian collectivist economy, wage slavery is replaced by the equitable and just sharing of labor. Private or state capitalism (or state "socialism") is replaced by workers' factory council, the union, the industrial association of unions up to the national federation of industrial unions.[19]

It is essentially a system of workers' self-management at all levels.

After the Revolution

The anarchist thinkers were not so naive as to expect the installation of the perfect society — composed of perfect individuals who would miraculously shed all their ingrained prejudices and old habits — on the day after the revolution. They were primarily concerned with the immediate problems of social reconstruction that will have to be faced in any country, industrialized or not. They are issues which no serious revolutionary has the right to ignore. It was for this reason that the anarchists tried to work out measures to meet the pressing problems most likely to emerge during what Malatesta called "the period of reorganization and transition." Here we'll summarize Malatesta's discussion of some of the more important questions.[20] Crucial problems cannot be avoided by postponing them to the distant future — perhaps a century or more — when anarchism will have been fully realized and the masses will have finally become convinced and dedicated anarchist-communists. We anarchists must

[19] *Nacht Über Spanien.* Darmstadtland, Deutschland: Verlag die Freie Gesellschaft

[20] *Malatesta: Life and Ideas,* Op. Cit., p. 100.

Workers' Control

The anarchist's insistence on workers' control — the idea of self-management of industry by workers' associations in accordance with their different functions, rest on very solid foundations. This [insistence] traces back to Robert Owen, the first International Workingmen's Association, the guild socialist movement in England and the pre-World War I syndicalist movements. With the Russian Revolution, the trend towards workers' control in the form of free soviets (councils), which arose spontaneously, was finally snuffed out with the Kronstadt massacre of 1921. The same tragic fate awaited the workers' councils in the Hungarian, Polish and East German risings [of the mid 1950's]. Among the many other attempts that were made, there is of course the classic example of the Spanish Revolution of 1936, with the monumental constructive achievements in the libertarian rural collectives and workers' control of urban industry. The prediction of *News Bulletin* of the reformist International Union of Food and Allied Workers Association (July 1964) that "the demand of workers' control may well become the common ground for advanced sectors in the labor movement both 'east' and 'west' is now a fact. Although the purged Bolshevik "left oppositionist," Victor Serge, refers to the economic crisis that gripped Russia during the early years of the revolution, his remarks are, in general, still pertinent and incidentally, illustrate Kropotkin's theme:

> [C]ertain industries could have been revived [and] an enormous degree of recovery achieved by appealing to the initiative of groups of producers and consumers, freeing the state-strangled cooperatives and inviting the various associations to take over management of different branches of economic activity . . . I was arguing for a communism of associations — in contrast to communism of the state — the total plan not dictated on high by the State, but resulting from the harmonizing by congresses and special assemblies from below.[18]

[18] *Memoirs of a Revolutionary.* London: Oxford University Press, 1967, pp. 147–148

The New Society Within the Shell of the Old

Anarchists have always opposed the Jacobins, Blanquists, Bolsheviks and other would-be dictators, who would, in Proudhon's words "reconstruct society upon an imaginary plan, much like the [dogmatic] astronomers who for respect for their calculations would make over the system of the universe."[14] The anarchist theoreticians limited themselves to suggest the utilization of all the useful organisms in the old society in order to construct the new. They envisioned the generalization of practices and tendencies which are already in effect. The very fact that autonomy, decentralization, and federalism are more practical alternatives to centralism and statism already presupposes that these vast organizational networks now performing the functions of society are prepared to replace the old bankrupt hyper-centralized administrations. That the "elements of the new society are already developing in the collapsing bourgeois society" (Marx) is a fundamental principle shared by all tendencies in the socialist movement. Society is a vast interlocking network of cooperative labor and all the deeply rooted institutions now functioning will, in some form, continue to function for the simple reason that the very existence of making depends upon this inner cohesion. This has never been questioned by anyone. What is needed is emancipation from authoritarian institutions *over* society and authoritarianism *within* the organization themselves. Above all, they must be infused with revolutionary spirit and confidence in the creative capacities of the people. Kropotkin in working out the sociology of anarchism, has opened an avenue of fruitful research which has been largely neglected by social scientists busily engaged in mapping out new areaa for state control. Kropotkin based himself on the essential principle of anarchist-communism — abolition of the wage system and distribution of goods and services on the principle, "From each according to his ability and to each according to his needs." He envisaged the structure of an anarchist-communist society as follows:

[14] *Proudhon.* Op. Cit., p. 20.

> The anarchist writers consider that their conceptions [of anarchist-communism] is not a utopia. It is derived, they maintain, from an analysis of tendencies that are at work already, even though state socialism may find temporary favor with the reformers . . . [T]he anarchists build their visions of the future upon those data which are supplied by the observations of life at the present time . . . [T]he idea of independent communes for the territorial organization, and of federations of trade unions for the organizations of [people] in accordance with their different functions, gave a concrete conception of a society regenerated by a social revolution. There remained only to add to these two modes of organization a third, which we saw rapidly developing during the last fifty years . . . The thousands upon thousands of free combines and societies growing up everywhere for the satisfaction of all possible and imaginable needs, economic, sanitary, and educational; for mutual protection, for the propaganda of ideas, for art, for amusement, and so on . . . an interwoven network, composed of an infinite variety of groups and federations of all sizes and degrees, local, regional, national and, international . . . [which] substitute themselves for the State and . . . all its functions . . . all of them covering each other, and all of them always ready to meet the new needs by new organizations and adjustments.[15]

Kropotkin's federalism aspires to the "complete independence of the Communes, the Federation of Free Communes and the Social Revolution *in the communes*, that is, *the formation of associated productive groups in the place of the state organization.*"(Martin Buber, Pathways in Utopia). The miniature municipal states, fashioned after the national States in which elected officials of political parties — lawyers, professionals, and politicians but *not the workers* — control social life will also be eliminated. For a Social Revolution that does not reach local and even neighborhood levels leads inevitably to the triumph of the counter-revolution. For Kropotkin, the "commune is no linger a territorial agglomeration; but . . . a synonym for the

[15] *Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets.* Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 1970, pp. 166–168, 284–285.

grouping of equals, knowing no borders, no walls. The social commune will cease to be clearly defined. Each group of the commune will necessarily be attracted to similar groups of other communes; they will group together, federate with each other, by bonds at least as solid as those tying them to their fellow townsmen; [they will] constitute a Commune of interests, of which members will be disseminated through a thousand cities and villages. Each individual will find satisfaction of his needs only in grouping together with other individuals have the same tastes and living in a hundred other communes."[16] The following excerpt from *Libertarian Communism* gives some of Issac Puente's ideas on the political and economic organization of society. Puente, a medical doctor, was an important anarchist thinker and activist who was imprisoned and then murdered by the fascists while fighting on the Saragossa front in the Spanish Civil War in 1936.

Libertarian communism is the organization of society without the state and without capitalist property relations. To establish libertarian communism it will not be necessary to invent artificial forms of organization. The new society will emerge from the "shell of the old." The elements of the future society are already planted in the existing order. They are the syndicate (union) and the 'free municipality which are old, deeply rooted, non-statist popular institutions spontaneously organized and embracing all towns and villages in urban and in rural areas. The free municipality is ideally suited to coping successfully with the problems of social and economic life in libertarian communities. With the free municipality there is also room for cooperative groups and other associations, as well as individuals to meet their own needs. . . . The terms "libertarian" and "communism" denote the fusion of two inseparable concepts, the indispensable prerequisites for the free society: collective and individual liberty.[17]

[16] *Words of a Rebel,* quoted by Paul Berman in *Quotations from the Anarchists.*

[17] *Libertarian Communism.* Tuscon, AZ: See Sharp Press, 2001.