

br

Number 12	Winter 86/87
PREFACE	2
FROM THE EDITOR	3
VIAGGIO IN AMERICA Rossella Di Leo	8
POEM Willa Schneberg	22
THE CHALLENGE OF MONDRAGON C. George Benello	24
POEMS Maria Mercedes Carranza Jaime Manrique Ardilla	35 36
REVIEW: The Anarchist Moment (John Clark) Clym Yeobright	38
LAST WRITES	47

PREFACE

"So slow is the rose to open" sang the poet. Little did we know how accurately his words would apply to our magazine. Actually our reason for appearing in such a dilatory fashion is somewhat contradictory: we are so late, because we wanted to speed up the composing of our issues.

The old "hot type" print shop that we knew and felt so comfortable with has, like so many other things that we grew up with, been gradually disappearing, but, recently, because of the sudden and dramatic impact of new technologies, we were pushed, a bit unwillingly, into the glamorous and seemingly all-conquering world of computers. Because of competition from "desk-top" publishers, our typesetting place closed and our old printer who had published all of our previous issues retired at the age of 85. Nonetheless, we imagined that our brave new world could have its virtues, but we little suspected the forms that its vices would take. Instead of having to rely upon the tense and uncertain schedules of the typesetting and print shops, we thought that we now might be able to do most of the work, ourselves, in putting together an issue of our magazine and gain more control over our destiny. How seductive is the siren call (actually the beep) of the computer world. No longer do we have typographers and printers to suggest, to see, and to correct - there is only the hypnotic light of the computer screen and the highly-touted, but often flawed "power" solutions to our problems. The machine's attempt at "justification" (how ironically appropriate that phrase turns out to be!) is amazingly good, but alas! not exact. The machine and its minions did not seem to realize that almost justified, a line which is almost straight is a meaningless achievement or concept. (is there an ideological point there?). In reality, it was often much quicker and more accurate to draw a straight line by hand and by eye than to do it on a computer.

Nonetheless we have studied, we have labored, we have cursed, we have struggled through a seemingly endless maze of software and computer fonts, ... and we have brought forth our first computerized issue, textually and graphically. We do hope now that we have acquired sufficient expertise with computers so that we will be able to appear more often...regularly? Well regularity is perhaps an over-rated virtue, better left to tracts about personal hygiene. At any rate here we are once again, however belatedly,.....



FROM THE EDITOR

Unlike most anarchists, I began my political journey on the far right rather than the far left. I have since become disillusioned with the politics of both right and left, and with the more extreme forms of feminism. Thus I consider myself an anarchist by way of disappointment, a refugee from objectivism, libertarianism, socialism, and lesbian separatism. If I have learned anything, it is that political dogma can wield a terrible, if unrecognized, power over otherwise intelligent, reasonable people.

My father, who has subscribed to *National Review* continuously since its inception, gave me *Atlas Shrugged* to read when I was eighteen. I became a devotee of Ayn Rand's philosophy of objectivism, attracted by her atheism, her apparent feminism, and her belief in a rational morality. I attended taped lectures by Leonard Piekoff of CCNY, an objectivist philosopher, on the history of philosophy, along with my fellow objectivists. I went to meetings of the Harvard-Radcliff Ayn Rand Society and the MIT Radicals for Capitalism. I socialized exclusively with objectivists, hungry for that abstract pinnacle of happiness which was the ultimate expression of the union of reason and emotion, as described in Rand's novels. My lovers were objectivist men who seldom danced. So while others of my generation were protesting the Vietnam War, I was in love with a member of the John Birch Society and helping to distribute pamphlets "exposing" the student movement at Columbia as irrational and barbarous.

My disillusionment with objectivism happened slowly. The first problem was that objectivism didn't seem to make people happy, as I had innocently expected on the basis of my interpretation of Rand's novels; in fact, I met many rather severely miserable objectivists. Even objectivists of many years' standing seemed lonely and alienated. I began to read much more psychology, especially Erich Fromm and some of the phenomenological psychologists, and I liked their view of people as "becoming." I began to question my commitment to a philosophy that couldn't produce the personal happiness I so desperately needed.

The second problem was that objectivism seemed limited to white, middle-class students who were headed for business or technical careers. I never met a gay or black objectivist, and only a few objectivists

over thirty-five. It seemed odd to me that a philosophy which claimed to be true for all people would only attract a certain segment of the population. I later decided that objectivism had its greatest appeal to young Protestants who had had enough training in science to question their religious beliefs, but who wanted to maintain their allegiance to the conservative politics of their parents. Rand's atheism, her respect for science, and her defense of the free market and capitalist values made her quite attractive to people like myself, who had taken their standard American education seriously, and who wanted to find a belief system which integrated the values of political conservatism with atheism instead of religion.

As I became more critical of the failure of objectivism to produce happiness for everyone, I noticed that the objectivists' favorite slogan, "A is A," was never really questioned. The heroes and heroines in Rand's novels derived moral courage from contemplating this tautological principle, in some mysterious way. Rand deduced substantive principles from this abstract equivalence, and I gradually fought my way to the realization that this must be fallacious on logical grounds. I knew I was moving away from objectivism for good when I visited the home of an objectivist couple. As I entered the living room, I saw "A is A" mounted above the fireplace in huge red wooden letters! I was dismayed and embarrassed at this level of reification. I was intellectually ashamed to be part of a group which could so hypostatize the very principles it should be questioning.

My last shreds of confidence in the objectivist movement dissipated when I discovered the true extent of Ayn Rand's personal dogmatism. My image of her changed from the passionate champion of reason evidenced in her novels to a paranoid defender of her own intellectual turf. She contacted the Harvard-Radcliff Ayn Rand Society to inform them that they ought to change their name, since they had never asked her permission to use her name in the title of their student club! She defended an extreme version of the doctrine of "intellectual property," and refused to discuss her ideas with anyone. After the split between Nathaniel Branden, Rand's protege, and Rand herself, charges and countercharges filled *The Objectivist* Rand's journal. Any illusions of open, rational dialogue evaporated.

After freeing myself from objectivism, I was curious about the left. Were leftists really as sinister as Ayn Rand had portrayed them? It was

by now 1971, and the anti-war movement was still going strong. I joined the student anti-war group at the University of Massachusetts at Boston, where I was an undergraduate. At the frequent and emotional meetings, I observed some disturbing events. I watched as "outsiders," such as members of the Progressive Labor Party, the Socialist Workers' Party, and Revolutionary Communist Party, came to our student meetings to influence our decisions. Nobody mentioned that they were not students. I raised the issue by pushing for a rule that anyone who voted on a policy had to work to implement it. I think we passed the rule, but these people kept coming anyway. Nobody saw these visits as infiltration, but everyone was paranoid about right-wing informants and inciters. This was only the first of many inconsistencies which I attribute to the insidiousness of dogmatic thinking. Whoever agrees with "us" can do no wrong; whoever disagrees with "us" can do no right.

As a participant in the meetings, I got swept up in the wild humanness of the leftists. They danced, they laughed, they cried! I thought of the objectivist dances where nobody danced. I experimented with drugs. I participated in the takeover of the college Admissions Office. Demonstrations were my first experience of the thrilling feeling of solidarity and power. I helped to plan a citywide demonstration which included students from many area colleges. I remember the excitement of marching, thousands strong, down a narrow, cavernous street in the financial district chanting "Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh, NLF is gonna win," and hearing the echoes thundering off the buildings into the sky.

As I began to come down from this Dionysian ecstasy, I noticed that extreme leftists had no better grip on any ultimate truth than extreme right wingers. As I studied marxist economics and theory, I realized that the marxism of many leftists was as much a habitual system of unquestioned beliefs as objectivism had been for many objectivists. "Isms" seemed to be rationalizations of prior commitments, rather than intellectually honest explorations of possible social arrangements. Leftist people were, on the whole, more fun, and their ideas were more fertile, but in the end, the practice was as deeply flawed as on the right. Despite extravagant rhetoric about the working class, most of the leftists I met were middle and upper class intellectuals. Their meetings were often more absurd than those of more conservative people, and the SWP, RCP, PLP, and Spartacists made the objectivists look positively open-minded. I was horrified when I met a member of the SWP who absolutely and

unconditionally refused to tell me his own political views, and insisted on merely repeating over and over "the party line." Extremists on both the right and the left seemed to confuse clarity with insight, simplistic thinking with profound analysis. Driven by the need for certainty, they sacrificed their awareness of the real complexity of the human condition. I still don't know if this knee-jerk dogmatism is necessary in politics, but I deplore its effect on dialogue, consensus, and the search for social truths.

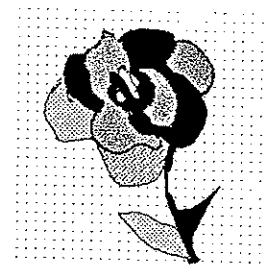
Thus disillusioned, I was quite wary of feminism's more extravagant claims, but I was eager to find what it did have to offer. While the rhetoric was often just as bad as any other movement's, the practice was much better. Women in the movement treated each other for the most part with respect and nurtured each other's growth. But lesbian separatism, as the most extreme form of feminist theory and practice, gave rise to some of the same absurdities I had noticed in other extreme belief systems. I once saw an advertisement in a local newspaper for a women's picnic, to be sponsored by the Women's Center in Cambridge, which invited all women, but only their female children! And because of the political importance of the concept of sisterhood, the existence of older dykes who wore wing tip men's shoes and men's suits, or who wore leather jackets and carried knives, was definitely played down. Lesbianism became a political fad, and one never really knew whether one was desired as a political validation or as a person. Although I still consider myself a feminist, I have great respect for the distorting power of any political belief system.

Anarchism, as I now understand it, is an ethic rather than a fixed set of beliefs. The starting point of anarchist practice is decency toward real people, rather than abstract constructs. Freedom is the freedom to develop one's humanity and to act for justice, not the freedom to form an irresponsible corporation in the name of the free market, or the freedom to form a dictatorship in the name of the future freedom of a classless society, or the freedom to banish all males from positions of power in society.

Anarchism is more advanced than a system of fixed beliefs in its respect for the fragility, complexity, and ultimate strength of human community. Anarchism builds people and builds community; economic and political solutions grow out of the primary social nexus of community. The current decline in the sense of community,

which many observers attribute to the technological advances of this century, has thus dealt a severe blow to the main resource of anarchism in industrialized countries. We are faced with the prospect of human survival without human community, a tragic loss of the intangible products of socialization such as a general culture, public courtesy, and respect for one another. How can anarchists hope to overcome this overwhelming decline?

The question is one which fills me personally with a sense of tragedy. We have lost something which fewer and fewer people can recognize, much less restore. My own answer is to involve myself with the people around me on the level of survival and intimacy. The shift toward narcissistic pleasures, in my view, is only one indication of what we have lost. To build community means to keep alive the network of obligation, trust, and social identity which has protected people throughout the long history of the human race. The very word obligation fills the rampant single with fear. Trust is something one learns at the therapist's office, and uses only sparingly in everyday life. One's identity is forged through a long process of value analysis and existentialist agony, if one is part of academic culture. The rest of us make do with bravado and anomie. If community is the womb of culture, we are facing the chilling prospect of generations of children indoctrinated with the pseudo-myths of advertising, cartoons, situation comedies, and popular music, growing up into cynical, lonely adults with strong images of violent conflict as the mainstay of their fantasy lives. It makes sense that drug use is on the rise, that senseless violence and barbarous human relationships are replacing what used to be common decency. Those who have never been truly initiated into the social universe cannot be expected to participate in their inherited culture. How can any political way of life, as opposed to a dogma, survive the breakdown of culture itself?



-Jean Chambers

Viaggio in America

Tripping through America

Rossella Di Leo

*To see ourselves from a different perspective is usually interesting and sometimes instructive . How often can we resist sneaking a peek at ourselves when we pass a reflecting surface? - ourselves being in this case the anarchists of North America. Today we are few in numbers and scattered in many places, but an intrepid emissary from Italy (to tell the truth, she is really from Sicily; there is a significant difference between the two I have been told) has, with amazing energy ,sought us out, looked at us, talked to us...in the process of which, she has managed to assimilate the very American, quite frantic mood of Kerouac's **On The Road**. criss-crossing the continent in a manner that he would have envied (in fact, our rather free translation of her more direct title is an oblique and parochial homage to **On The Road**) . In a gracious reply to our request she sent us her written impressions of what she saw, what she heard, what she experienced, doing so with a wide range of cultural references - Goethe, Sterne, etc. (and a use of parentheses) that leaves us awestruck. We , along with Rossella, are hopeful that this view from the other side of the looking glass can begin a dialogue among us that will begin help to restore the once strong international dimension of anarchism. (Though it is now a bit after she wrote it, we feel it is still valid. Perhaps, after her American encounter, she can understand that the modern world (and especially computers) not only help you save time more efficiently, but allow you to squander it more easily...beep,beep.)*

-translator's note

As Ursula LeGuin aptly says in **The Dispossessed**, "The true voyage is the return." In fact, it was only after having returned home, unpacked my bags, greeted my family and friends, and reestablished my contact with domestic reality that my American trip (three hectic months that dragged

me north, south, east and west) began to become "intelligible". It was only after I had let my jumbled impressions settle down (for they had transformed me into a receptacle that gulped down facts without digesting them) that the trip lost its fantastic dimension and became "real". And it is only now that I feel ready to put down in a more coherent and considered manner several impressions of this trip which may be worth relating - at the risk of boring some readers. Some among you may have noted that the title of this article echoes the well-known book of Goethe, **Travels in Italy**. (I could have referred also to other well-known book , **A Sentimental Voyage through France and Italy**, by Lawrence Sterne - which in my version would have read "A Sentimental Voyage throughout the United States and Canada" - but then I felt such a title might mislead some readers, promising more than it would deliver. Finally I preferred the more sober reference to Goethe.) I don't do this immodestly but rather in an attempt to give a certain cultural dignity to a little practised custom among anarchists, one which I hope will become more common - the exchange of travel impressions between anarchists who are crossing oceans and boundaries in ever increasing numbers. My objective is not to compile an alternative guide a la "anarcho-tourist"(even if this idea shouldn't be easily dismissed), but rather to "de-provincialize" anarchist culture, which seems to have lost its international dimension, enclosing itself within often anguished national confines. This cultural fragmentation of anarchism, impeding the flow of ideas, experiences, and information (also caused by the lack of a functioning international network) has dispersed a wealth of acquaintanceships which put together would have surely accelerated the theoretical renewal of anarchism. This has without doubt accentuated a geographical and cultural diversification which, without any concessions to homogeneity-at-any-cost, has for me results undoubtedly negative. Needless to say, one of the greatest differences concerns North-American and European anarchism. (I know! It's too grand a generalization, but grant me a few in order to make some order of the still jumbled impressions of my trip.) It's not that European anarchism doesn't have "Yankee" cultural traits or that one can't find more refined traits in American anarchism than in those of the Old World, but, usually, the tendency of these cultural traits allows one to distinguish between these two perspectives. At this point I'd like to take a brief parenthesis to discuss several cultural similarities and difference which I found surprising.

This wasn't my first trip to North America, actually my fourth, but, already from my first contact with American culture, I was surprised to find myself "European", a definition that up to then hadn't been part of my repertoire. I discovered differences not only in driving cars (very careful, I would say, in general, except for New York City, which finding itself on the same latitude as Naples, has developed a similar style) and the manner in which doors open (they push when you want to pull and pull when you want to push), but, above all, there is a difference in language, of behaviour, of cultural references which, almost by surprise, makes me discover a connection to European culture that I had not felt before.

The second surprise I had was to notice how these differences were present in anarchist culture as well as in "official" culture. At first I was convinced that anarchism had produced the double effect of being isolated, thanks to its "deviant nature" from the surrounding "official" culture, and, at the same time, of activating a process of internal homogenization. Now, if this proves to be true from an ethical and (in part) philosophical point of view, from a more strictly cultural point of view the bond between anarchism and the immediate reality which surrounds it, remains stronger than I suppose, while the process of homogenization remains weaker. Here is the reason for the American imprint upon their anarchism and the European imprint upon our own that so astonished me initially. A good example of what I have said is the pragmatic approach so typical of American culture and found as well among the anarchists (to convince oneself of this one simply has to glance at anarchist writing).

One could stretch the list of convergences between official and deviant culture on both sides of the ocean to infinity, but I prefer to have this convergence come out during the course of the following discussion. For the moment it will be enough to underline the importance of this relationship which, combined together with that "provincial" development of anarchism, which we have already noted, explains the extraneousness that characterizes contemporary anarchist tendencies. It is a hole which I think can be filled; a matter which I will seek to accomplish within the limits of my possibilities (supplied only with a teaspoon).

At this point (and briefly for goodness sakes!) a description of the writer: a woman, Italian, a bit over thirty, who, although Sicilian (no Mafia connection), lives in Milano, has been active in the movement since the mythical year of 1968, and since 1976 works at the Center for Libertarian Studies, part of an anarchist editorial collective.

This finishes the biographical note, but more important is a biopolitical note that is essential for two reasons. First of all, to understand the motivations for a trip that finds its significance within the context of political-cultural project which transcends individual decision. Secondly, because explicating the theoretical presuppositions (preconceptions), the expectations (and the myths) of the writer not only makes her comments become more intelligible but makes the voyage assume a new and more complex dimension: it is not only a "voyage" through the world which is described, but also a "voyage" in the inner world of the one who describes.

I belong to that generation which is called in Europe "the sixty-eighters", formed politically in that year of social turbulence whose impact in Italy lasted until the mid-seventies. It is a generation (today between 30 and 40 years old) "political" to the core, nourished by ideology, militant by definition, predominantly materialistic and rationalistic, sometimes dogmatic. Now, don't think that I am so self-critical to define myself like this. This was true --- but no longer! However these were the political origins of my generation and it is undeniable that they have left their mark upon our thinking. (If I am not mistaken, to find this type of mentality in North America one has to return to the thirties - a great difference in time which is an obvious symptom of the different development of American anarchism.)

In this debatable legacy of the sixties there is however an element which I still accept entirely: the spirit of militancy. That is the deep conviction that only through a daily commitment can one satisfy the desire (ethical and aesthetic) to transform this society of domination, in which, willingly or unwillingly, we live. Beyond this, little else remains from that mentality, which became part of our anarchist cultural imagery (which we can summarily describe as "political, insurrectionist, and proletarian") that prevailed until the mid-seventies and has been in constant decline since then.

The scenario is more complex if we enlarge our view to cover European reality (and here we bow down before that too-dichotomous representation of "European" culture as opposed to "American" culture). The decline of this imagery, verified throughout "Western" Europe (in a political and not in a geographical sense), has come about in different tempi, leading to the formation of two distinct geo-cultural areas. The most rapid decline has been in north-central Europe, where an existential-communitarian anarchism has developed (much like that found in North America); while the decline has been slower in the Latin areas, where it has

remained predominately a classic anarchism, more traditional in form and in content (and much closer to Latin-American temperaments). (In passing, I should note the formation within international anarchism of the same division between North and South so typical of the dominant economical-political structure.) Even here it should be realized that we are not dealing with two exactly opposite and clearly marked areas: parts of one can be found in the other and vice-versa. Let us say rather that this description reveals above all the prevalent trait in each geo-cultural area.

This last clarification was necessary in order to describe properly the activities of the group to which I belong. While having our roots in a Latin culture, for more than a decade we have been trying to renew anarchist theory, especially through several publishing-cultural initiatives: il Centro Studi Libertari (The Center for Libertarian Studies), A Rivista (the anarchist journal A), Volonta' (an anarchist quarterly), Edizioni Antistato (an anarchist publishing house), and, in the past, another anarchist quarterly, Interrogations, all different aspects of a single project.

This process of theoretical rethinking seems to us unavoidable because the anarchism that came to us from the nineteenth century, and which with certain successful grafts remained vital up to the Spanish Revolution, today is no longer able to give satisfactory answers, either in the "computer-anarchist" or "post-industrial" society (however meaningful these definitions are). We find ourselves therefore in front of a structural, not a conjunctural, crisis, which is anyway not an "ideological" crisis, nor even an ethical one. It is not anarchism as the extreme and most coherent antithesis of a dominating society, as an egalitarian and libertarian option, that is in doubt, but its historical form - that insurrectional and proletarian anarchism which we have noted, that "political" anarchism (in its organizational structure and social discourse) which has shown many times its limits and its incongruities.

The first task in this process of theoretical renewal is to identify the "hard core" of anarchism, outside of its historical form which it has assumed up to now: to update this "core" with one or more forms consonant with contemporary society; and above all to remake an anarchist cultural imagery which can free itself from the myths and from the rhetoric of a glorious but bygone era and which can interact creatively with the myths, the aspects, and the utopian aspects extracted from the "deviant" culture of our time.

Let me now pick up the thread of my "trip" (after this parenthesis about the European movement, too long and at the same time too short), by quoting two popular proverbs both of which include the sane premises and conclusions: while the first tells us "the grass is always greener in someone else's yard", the second says "all that glitters is not gold".

The why of the first proverb is quickly understood: in the work of theoretical renewal, our attention has been obviously been attracted by that existential-communitarian anarchism which seemed to be so flourishing in North America. The ethical and theoretical premises of this anarchism (which others prefer to call a neo-anarchism) could be a valid response to this qualitative and quantitative crisis which was (and is) consuming the Italian movement (and, in general, classical anarchism).

More specifically, this overseas anarchism was distinguished for us by a greater vitality and dynamism which allowed it to identify more rapidly the tears, libertarian in form and content, in the social fabric; by a greater adaptive capacity which allowed it to interact in an easier and more elastic manner with emerging libertarian movements; by a consequent greater social diffusion, not only in quantitative terms but also as a cultural influence (thanks to that cultural tradition of American individualism which seemed to us to facilitate anarchist discourse). All objectives which we have been pursuing for some time - and with modest results - in Italy, where we find ourselves with a movement weighed down by tradition, which moves with the grace and dignity of an elephant (although without its dimensions).

As I previously noted, the reality which I found before me was not identical with the image which we had, looking from a distance. Not that the reality was totally different, but several traits were less pronounced and others produced "collateral effects" which we had not noticed.

My original impression was gradually modified, above all, by many talks with anarchists of all sorts: from the most nitpicking academics to hippies of the old school, from the ancient militants of the old emigrant movement to the young militants of the ecological movement, etc. Although different among themselves by location and by interests, they seemed to me to be bound together by a similar outlook - a sense of disillusionment, a psycho-political depression often greater than that commonly found in Europe.

Pragmatic approach. Fragment I

The size and degree of this depression is naturally not uniform. Geographically, I found its greatest concentration in the Mid-West, while on both coasts (perhaps because of the beneficial effects of the sea) the depression is less virulent. I found the "anarcho-greens" to be unquestionably among the less depressed tendencies, while I found the situation of anarcho-feminism somewhat negative, in a phase where, in my opinion, it has lost direction.

A peculiar effect of this depressed state is a compulsive desire to move about. The anarchists of the Mid-West want to transfer themselves to the Coasts, those on the East Coast think about moving to California and those in California talk of going to Europe. Faced with this psychomotoring mania (quite surprising for an European of the post-migratory era), I remember a saying of a Latin poet, "coelos non animos mutant" (they change places but not their state of mind).

That sage advice, mentioned about two years ago in the pages of the journal, *Volonta'*, at the height of the crisis which wracked the Italian movement echoed in my mind: "let us leave pessimism for better times". An invitation (paradoxical, certainly, but at the same time full of good sense) to react to the crisis with a rational optimism that contrasts with the emotional pessimism that is typical of today. Certainly the eighties, particularly in Europe, follow a decade (the "roaring" seventies) that make today seem decidedly depressing, but...Reagan is not the incarnation of Leviathan and we have gotten past 1984 without the gloomy prophesies of Orwell coming true.

I am convinced, moreover, that the present heart-felt pessimism is a necessary phase of anarchism's development. It was necessary to pass through the present profound crisis to accelerate the process of theoretical renewal; -to make us reflect, a phase which is almost thirty years overdue and without which anarchism would certainly end. There are, moreover, a series of "existential" discoveries which, it appears, every generation has to make for itself. So it was only recently that we found that the revolution was not just around the corner, that history was not a progressive, linear movement, that reason does not inevitably guide human actions, and, horror of horrors, that we are mortal and that utopias are rarely created during the course of one's life.

As you see, there is enough to make us deeply pessimistic; but, rather than morbidly wallowing in our disappointments, it is better to resist and to find positive signs in the real world that can corroborate reason's optimism. Without entering into details (which would require a wide-ranging discussion), we can refer to those libertarian tensions and ferments which, notwithstanding the crisis of official anarchism, continue to poke through the fabric of the society of domination (a *certain* feminism, a *certain* ecology, a *certain* pacifism, a *certain* decentralism, etc.). It's true that many tears are continually mended, but it is also true that in the long run the cloth becomes threadbare and, in the long run, wears out

And yet, in contrast to this to pessimism, another fundamental discourse, which was among the motives that led me to a closer knowledge of American anarchism, is also true - living anarchism. That is anarchism as an ethic and an aesthetic, the anarchism of "here and now", utopia lived: it was to search out the theoretical basis of this existential-communitarian anarchism that I undertook my American trip.

Before affirming (and perhaps attracting the annoyance of many) that "all that glitters is not gold", I prefer (in an attempt to make myself not totally detestable) to talk of the positive aspects that I found in American anarchism.

Actually, many of the positive aspects which we attributed to American anarchism from a distance are real. And let us begin exactly with that prevalent existential-communitarian anarchism which does not intend to put off the possibility of living as anarchist until "the glorious future". This practice of day-by-day anarchism has had the merit of having produced an anarchist sensibility which influenced the style of all life (that is beyond the specifically "political") in a more pervasive, coherent, and profound manner than in other geo-cultural areas like Italy. Let it be emphasized again that we are talking of prevalent traits, not solitary ones, of which many exceptions can be found. As can be seen this type of approach is not wholly absent from traditional anarchism, but it is found there in an atrophied form. The novelty introduced by existential-communitarian anarchism is not to have "invented" anarchism as a way of life, but to have displaced the accent from political militancy (and therefore from the movement as a "party") to daily life (that is to the anarchist community).

Pragmatic approach. Fragment II

This anarchist sensibility is present in many more existential milieus than we find in Europe. The aspiration to social marginality is an idea which is often found in American anarchist publications (above all in revealing "letters to the editors"). The type of work that is selected (part-time triumphs among the anarchist ranks) is often a confirmation of this marginalist mentality which refuses at the same time social integration along with the social guarantees that this would bring.

On the contrary, in Italy - apart from some rare examples of "pure and strong" anarchists (but watch out for the fakes!) - marginality is not a widespread choice. Anarchists are spread throughout all the working categories, from the lower to the middle classes, and no one dreams of giving up social guarantees such as pensions, social security, vacations, etc. There is a greater leap in general between the militant ethic (deeply felt) and the existential ethic (more-or-less "permissive") than in North America. An example: the number of "traditional" families which I found among the North American anarchists is clearly smaller than in Europe (and above all in Italy).

Precisely this emphasis on daily life has facilitated the participation of anarchists within emerging social movements (as an "individual" and not as "movement": a fundamental difference of stance with respect to the approach more largely accepted by the European movement). This participation has given the double benefit of re-enforcing libertarian traits present in these movements and to give some oxygen to anarchism, bringing to its thinking and to its practice new themes and new forms of struggle. Thanks to this interaction, in North America one does not find (at least to the same degree) that division between "movement" and "libertarian ground", so typical of Italian reality.

Among the traits which seemed to be recognizable in American anarchism I have first listed a greater vitality and dynamism, which is in part reconfirmed by close analysis. Important in this development has been (beyond the undoubted influence of "official" culture) the lesser weight given to anarchist tradition in the "ideological" formation of American anarchists after the Second World War. It is an event which closes the epoch of immigrant anarchists and opens the era of an "autonomous"

anarchism, whose ties with the past are much looser than those maintained by the European movement.

In Europe, neither the Second World War nor the sixties resulted in making a significant break with the old anarchism (although more strain was produced) and only in the last decade has the process of theoretical renewal begun to develop. Up to then the "weight of tradition" had held up a "heretical" rethinking, reproducing an "orthodoxy" which was showing itself to be mortal. No wonder then that ideological hardening of the arteries and organizational institutionalization was mummifying the European movement.

This (apocalyptic) vision, it seems, remains extraneous to American anarchism which, not having inherited this cumbersome tradition, interacts more freely with the changed socio-economic reality. Those matters, which remained tabu to us up to very recent times (look at the example of revolution, proposed over and over again until yesterday in the same terms as in the nineteenth century), were, instead, desacramentalized in North America without much fuss and without too great a sense of guilt.

I have criticized European and, above all, Italian anarchism in order to look at the other side of the coin and allow myself some critical remarks about American anarchism.

As you have noticed, I have often talked of the European movement, while I have accurately avoided using this term in referring to North America, preferring to use the more generic term American anarchism. It is easy to understand why - while in Europe the greater part of anarchists are in the movement (that is, a network of contacts which however loose constitute an organizational structure), in North America the greater part are outside the movement. Or, to put it better, they are outside the idea of the movement. Since, before there is an organizational structure and a functioning mentality, we talk about the manner in which the group and the individual perceive themselves, about how "one thinks about things".

In Europe (less so in central-north, more so in the latin areas) the prevailing conception is still that tradition of the political movement (or a community of militants, as it has sometimes been defined). The movement is the place of the political and the political is the way of anarchism. From this vision, itself, develops - beyond organizational forms - a sense of belonging to an anarchist community, as much as to a community of thought, which has cemented the the European movement together, creating those foundations which have allowed it to overcome the worst

crises. It is just this sense of belonging to the ideal community that I searched for in vain in North America.

Not that in the past this sense of belonging did not exist - the immigrant anarchist movement nourished this classical conception. Today, however, American anarchism results in a number of individuals and groups rather than a movement, whose collective force (the concept is of Proudhon; and don't accuse me, because of this, of having quoted the "classics" too much) is not utilized to construct either an organizational net or an ideal community.

The danger, in my view, that American anarchism runs - if it does not happen to develop this sense of belonging to an ideal, if it does not develop an identity which transcends the day-to-day (without denying it) and which brings together in a general vision the thousand aspects of its social presence - is that of transforming its social "diffusion" into a social "dispersion".

The fact that an organized movement does not exist (according to European standards) derives, yes, from this lack of ideal identification, but also from the influence of the larger culture surrounding it, with its burden of individualism and isolationism.

Pragmatic approach: fragment III.

With regard to the isolationist mentality I wish to open a list of grievances. This point of view, found in less-concentrated form in anarchism, is changed by the official culture (the U.S. above all.) unabashedly "Americo-centric". A perusal of the national press, quite revealing, makes one quickly understand the underlying basis of this conception: there is the United States of America and somewhere in the outskirts the rest of the world. Now I don't say that American anarchism has the same (arrogant) conception, but it has taken from it that isolationist mentality of which I talk. Its attention is too centered upon the American reality and too little upon the world's reality.

One could object that cases like Nicaragua (or Viet Nam) contradict this statement, but this is not so, for in my opinion, these countries have been important only insofar as their paths have unfortunately crossed that of the U.S. I wish to suggest that we also turn our attention upon that part of reality ignored by the mass-media and official culture, and often more interesting from an anarchist point of view. A reality which is often known

only through a reading of the alternative press, since the mass-media takes care to circulate only a certain type of news. And here I must once more lament: I know that this suggestion more than likely falls into a void since too few american anarchists read foreign languages. This, beyond removing a fundamental international dimension from American anarchism, is particularly irritating for whoever has to "sweat blood" to learn English. For example, this need to learn other languages was deeply felt in the "old" movement, where even an anarchist mason like Pio Turrone could read and speak French and Spanish, besides Italian.

Opposite to the European conception, the basic standard is that of "organized guerilla warfare": many small groups (or small networks of groups) which form and dissolve themselves with great ease; which do not aspire to institutionalize themselves (that is to perpetuate themselves beyond certain predetermined goals); which are single-issue oriented, without reaching for more general goals. If in the European movement the accent is placed upon stability and continuity (whose negative dangerous other side is "organizational immortality"), in American anarchism the accent is placed upon dynamism (which, exaggerated by a maddening mobility, runs the risk of degenerating onto "infantile mortality").

Pragmatic approach. Fragment IV

For a fanatical organizer like me the lack of anarchist centers (which one can count on the fingers of one hand) is disconcerting: the too few and casual nature of meetings between anarchists of the same geographic area (I do not even dare to imagine national meetings); the almost non-existence of networks (even around publications, which do not constitute that organizational web so important for the European movement)

Utilizing for the moment the technique of "juggling two things at the same time" (another Italian proverb), let us turn now to the European movement. That tradition which I so heavily attacked in the preceding pages, has just revealed itself to be essential in providing the anarchist movement with a cultural, philosophical, and ethical background which gives a certain coherence to its actions and its thought. This patrimony of struggle and of thought, left as a heritage by classical anarchism, even if, on one hand, it blocks the road to theoretical renewal, on the other, it

presents us with a rich referential framework (philosophically, historically, practically...) which is fundamental if we are not to lose our way in the social labyrinth. Moreover, it allows us to proceed through this social labyrinth because it gives us an "ideal direction" which does not let us lose ourselves in the many winding curves that we must take in seeking an exit.

Speaking plainly, the frame of reference furnished by classical anarchism, if it is not reduced to a pious reading of sacred texts, can give us a world vision which can give meaning to daily action, can give us an "ideal direction" when we are passing through the small segments of that labyrinth whose proportions escape us. From this patrimony (which is often ignored in North America, sometimes disparaged, or sometimes repeated pedantically) we do not derive the *how* of our social action, but the *why*, distilling all of its ethical force and utopian tension.

Tradition, typically Janus-faced, has at the same time a positive and negative value, which is not limited to what has just been said. If it is indeed true that tradition generates the ideal community, its "political" vocation has held back the affirmation of anarchism as a way of life - a conception that does not deny a community of militants, but integrates it within a more complex community that includes every aspect of existence. It seems to me that if one part of the European movement is the carrier of a world vision and an utopian tension peculiar to its identity as a community of militants, American anarchism is instead the carrier of a philosophy of life and an anarchist sensibility peculiar to its identity as an existential community.

And now I think the moment for conclusions has arrived.

My first conclusion is that anarchism has suffered from a defective vision: a defect not serious but troublesome. If indeed one eye is near-sighted, the other is far-sighted. The effects are well-known: the near-sighted eye sees well only what is close (let us say the "here and now") while the horizon remains obscured by a confusing fog; the far-sighted eye sees well only the far distance (let us call it utopia) while it is unable to see well what is under its own nose.

The metaphor, it seems to me, is explicit enough. American anarchism (the near-sighted eye) has to enrich itself with a world vision that will give more sense (both in direction and meaning) to its social practice. European anarchism, above all Italian (the far-sighted eye), instead of being

led astray by the "sun of the future" has to look around itself a little and transform into daily practice that part of utopian tension which drives it.

The second conclusion is that this defective vision is not incurable, but it will not correct itself. To cure it the active collaboration of the patient will be necessary. The cure, among other things, is experimental.

I certainly do not think that one solution to the problem exists. I hope that it's clear during the course of my reflections that I am not trying to sell a product, nor promoting any miraculous formula. I am firmly convinced only that the prospect of a theoretical renewal of anarchism is completely experimental and that we must proceed by means of a synthesis between classical and existential-communitarian anarchism, between the utopian practice of the first and the anarchist sensibility of the second.

Let us bring to an end this "trip" within a trip. I have done what I can with my reflections to deepen our reciprocal understanding and to begin (armed with my tea spoon) to fill in the existing gaps of international anarchism. Events like the international anarchist meeting organized in Venice during 1984 are other very worthwhile ways to proceed in the same direction. To come out of the tunnel is not an individual task, but will be a collective work, made by that collective force which is greater than the sum of its parts (and here we returned to Proudhon, whom I swear - I really mean it - I have never read).

Milano, Italy / August 1985
(translated by Robert D'Attilio)



SUICIDE NOTE

for Louis Lingg (dead Nov. 10, 1887)

The day of the Haymarket Affair
I was making bombs with Seliger
in my small room and getting worked-up
as we talked about women exhausting themselves
over spinning machines fined for singing
of their half-remembered villages,
fined for staying home to care for
children stricken with pox and of the canary-dead
coal miners obliged to buy in the company store
at 20% more than they would pay on the outside.

By evening, there were fifty round
and pipe shape contrivances with caps attached
and we celebrated the virtues of dynamite!. How cheerful and,
gratifying to light the fuse
in the neighborhood of a lot of rich loafers
who live off the sweat of other people's brows.
A lb. of this stuff beats a bushel of ballots.

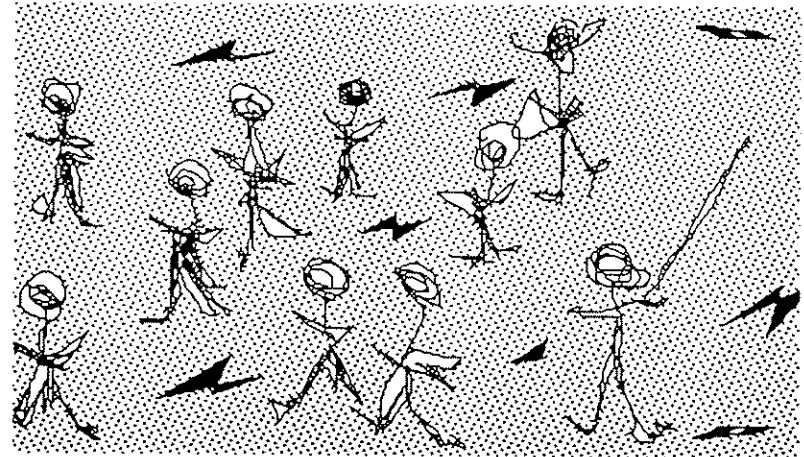
We quit the rooming house, carrying between us
by a stick through the handle, a small truck
filled with bombs, which we left in the hallway
of Zeph's Hall and went to take a beer
in a nearby saloon, when a bomb hurtled
through the air, glowing and sputtering,
striking down Degan and other foes of the
working man, changing the course of history.

I despise them, their order, their laws,
their force-propped authority. I do not
recognize the court's sentence. I'm to hang
not for a crime, but because I refuse
to be governed by the profit motive, labor

exploiters, children slayers, home despoilers.
Last night I heard music from a ball somewhere.
I so wanted to go there and dance.
I can only hope that the girl who I loved,
when she presses her head against another
man's shoulder will sometimes pretend
he is me smelling her perfume.

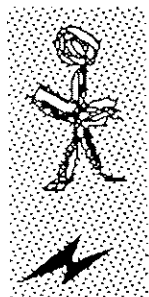
Farewell, Adolph, Albert, August, George.
I will not follow you to the gallows
to wear the noose the plutocrats call justice.
A comrade smuggled in a special baby of a smoke,
not exactly a Havana, but top quality never-the-less,
inside a dynamite cartridge alive as the unborn
in a mother's womb. Certainly no time is better
than the present to sit back and inhale
the aroma of a good 5 cent cigar.

-Willa Schneberg



The Challenge of MONDRAGON

C. George Benello



Anarchism has a long tradition of counterinstitutional development. In Spain in particular anarchists developed a whole system of governance that included industry and agriculture as well as transportation during the Spanish Civil War. Remnants of this still exist -- a Barcelona bus cooperative for example. It is of interest, therefore, that the Basque region has, in recent years, seen the rise of a system of cooperatives that is unparalleled in its dynamism, growth, and economic impact on a region. The system, which spreads throughout the surrounding Basque region, is named after Mondragon, a town in the mountains of Guipuzkoa Province near Bilbao, the place where the first cooperatives started. It has, since its start thirty years ago, gained an international reputation, with similar models now being developed in England, Wales, and the United States.

It is not possible to trace any direct anarchist influence in the development of Mondragon: it was the UGT, the socialist union, that has predominated in its factories, rather than the anarchist CNT. But the town of Mondragon was the first in the Basque region to send soldiers to fight on the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War. Thus while its explicit connections to the anarchist tradition are unclear, the Mondragon system is an example of liberatory organization which, like its predecessors in the Spanish Civil War, has achieved success on a scale unequalled in any other part of the world.

Mondragon was founded some thirty years ago by a Catholic priest, Don Jose Maria Arizmendi, a man who had narrowly missed being put to death by Franco as a result of his participation in the Spanish Civil War on the Republican side. With the help of collections from citizens of Mondragon, he founded an elementary technical school in 1943. The first graduates numbered among them five men who then went on, after an unsuccessful attempt to democratize a local steel factory, to found in 1956

a small factory named Ulgor, numbering initially 24 members, and given to the manufacture of a copied paraffin stove.

This venture proved successful and developed into the "flagship enterprise" of the whole system which later was to come into being. At one point Ulgor numbered over 3,000 members, although this was later recognized as too large and was reduced. The structure of this enterprise served as the model for the latter enterprises forming the system. Following the Rochdale principles, it had one member-one vote, open membership, equity held by members and hence external capitalization by debt, not equity, and permanent education. However it adapted and added to these principles in a fashion that made it differ significantly from industrial cooperatives developed hitherto. It is these additional principles which are responsible for its dynamism and success, in contradistinction to almost all industrial cooperatives which preceded it. The additions can be summarized as follows:

1. It developed a system of individual internal accounts into which 70% of the profits (a more accurate term is "surplus") of the cooperative were placed. Each member had such an internal account. 30% were put in a collective account for operating capital and expansion, with a portion of that being earmarked for the community. The individual internal accounts noted receipt of the portion of the surplus earmarked for it, but this was then automatically loaned back to the cooperative, with interest paid. Upon leaving, members receive 75% of the accumulated funds credited to their internal account, while 25% is retained as the capitalization which made the job possible. This system essentially allows the cooperative to capitalize close to 100% of its yearly profit, and gives it a capacity for internal capital accumulation unequalled by any capitalist enterprise. It also establishes an ongoing flow-through relation between the individual and collective portions of the surplus.

2. A membership fee was determined, now about \$3,000, which represents a substantial investment in the cooperative, and which could be deducted from initial earnings. This too is credited to the internal account. Both the membership fee and the share of the surplus represent methods of ensuring commitment through financial incentives. Unlike older cooperatives, which often determined the membership fee on the basis of dividing the net worth into the number of shares, hence making the membership fee prohibitive (in one Oregon plywood cooperative the

membership fee grew to \$40,000, resulting in the cooperative hiring wage labor) the fee is arbitrary and fixed at an affordable amount.

3. Unlike traditional cooperatives, members are considered to be worker-entrepreneurs, whose job is both to assure the efficiency of the enterprise but also to help develop new enterprises. They do this in their deliberative assemblies and also by depositing their surplus in the system's bank, described below, which is then able to use it to capitalize new enterprises. There is a strong commitment on the part of the membership to this expansive principle, and it is recognized that the economic security of each cooperative is dependent on their being part of a larger system, in ways that will become clear as we proceed.

4. A probationary period of one year was fixed upon, to ensure that new members were not only appropriately skilled, but possessed the necessary capacity for cooperative work. Whereas in a capitalist enterprise workers are considered "factors of production" in a cooperative they are members of an organization with both the rights and duties of membership, sharing also in the ownership of the organization. Thus while there is open membership, members must be able to participate not simply as hired hands but must be able to discharge their membership duties by sharing in the management of the enterprise. This requires a capacity for responsibility and group participation that in turn implies a certain level of maturity.

5. The "anticipo" or percentage of earnings that would in a conventional enterprise be considered as wages, was fixed at prevailing wage levels, minimizing conflict with other local enterprises. Also, the wage differential -- the difference between the lowest and highest wage -- was set at 1 to 3. This ensures an egalitarianism between workers and the management -- selected by the General Assembly of workers -- that makes for high morale. Wage levels are determined by a formula which takes into account the difficulty of the job, personal performance, experience, and 'relational skills'. Relational skills have been given greater weight recently out of a recognition that in cooperative work they significantly affect group performance.

6. Above all, Mondragon represents a "systems approach" to cooperative development. In addition to the base level industrial cooperatives there are a set of so called second degree cooperatives which variously engage in research, financing, technical training and education, technical assistance, and social services. In addition there are

housing and consumer cooperatives which collectively are able to create a cooperative culture in which the basic activities of life take place. Members can operate within a context of interdependent and cooperating institutions which follow the same principles; this prevents 'cognitive dissonance' and makes for enhanced efficiency.

To continue the story: three years after Ulgor was founded, Don Arizmendi suggested the need for a financial institution to help fund and also give technical assistance to other start-up cooperatives. As a result, the Caja Laboral Popular, a credit union cum technical assistance agency was founded. The CLP contains an Empressarial Division, with over a 100 member staff, which works intensively with a group desiring to start up a cooperative, or in rare cases convert an existing enterprise. It does location studies, market analysis, product development, plans the buildings, and then works continuously for a number of years with the start-up group until it is clear that it is thoroughly developed and financially and organizationally sound. In return the CLP requires that the cooperative be part of the Mondragon system, via a "Contract of Association," which specifies the already proven organizational and financial structure, and entails a continuing supervisory relation on the part of the CLP which has loaned it start-up funds. As indicated, the surplus of the industrial cooperatives is held by the CLP as a loan and reinvested in further cooperatives. This close and continuing relationship with the financial and technical expertise of the CLP is both unique and largely responsible for the 100% success rate within the system.

The CLP is considered a second degree cooperative, and its board is made up of a mix of first level or industrial cooperative members and members from within the CLP itself. In addition to the CLP there are a number of other second degree cooperatives: a social service cooperative which assures 100% pension, 100% disability benefits, a health care clinic, and a women's cooperative which allows for both flex-time and part-time work; women can move freely from this to the industrial cooperatives. Also there is a system of educational cooperatives, including a technical college which includes a production cooperative in which students both train and earn money as part-time workers. This too is operated as a second degree cooperative, with a mixed board made up of permanent staff and students.

Mondragon also features a large system of consumer cooperatives throughout the province, housing cooperatives, and a number of agricultural cooperatives and building cooperatives. Today the total

system's net worth is in the billions and consists of 93 production cooperatives averaging several hundred members, 44 educational institutions, 7 agricultural cooperatives, 14 building cooperatives, along with the 3 service cooperatives mentioned, and a network of consumer cooperatives with 75,000 members. The Caja Laboral has 132 branches in the Basque region, and has recently opened an office in Madrid. This is significant; since it indicates a willingness to expand beyond the Basque region. The CLP's assets are over a billion dollars.

Mondragon produces everything from home appliances -- it is the second largest refrigerator manufacturer in Spain -- to machine tool factories and ferry boats, both of which it exports abroad. It represents over 1% of the total Spanish export product. With its 18,000 workers, it produces about 15% of all the jobs in Gipuzkoa Province and 5% in the Basque country. Although a major part of its products are in middle level technologies, it also produces high technology products. Its research institute, Ikerlan, regularly accesses U.S. data bases including that of M.I.T., and has developed its own industrial robots, for external sale and for use in its own factories. This is typical of its approach to technology, which is to assimilate new technologies and make them its own. Mondragon has spent considerable time studying and implementing alternatives to the production line; its self-managed organizational system is now being complemented with the technology of group production.

The internal organization of a Mondragon cooperative features a General Assembly which ordinarily meets annually and selects management. In addition there is a Social Council which deals specifically with working members' concerns. There is also a Directive Council, made up of managers and members of the General Assembly, in which managers have a voice but no vote. This system of parallel organization ensures extensive representation of members' concerns, and serves as a system of checks and balances. Mondragon enterprises are not large; a deliberate policy now limits them to around 400 members. Ulgor, their first, grew too large, and at one point in its early history had a strike, organized by dissidents. The General Assembly voted to throw the ringleaders out. But they learned their lesson: size of its own accord can breed discontent.

In order to obtain the benefits of large scale along with the benefits of small individual units, Mondragon has evolved a system of cooperative development wherein a number of cooperatives constitute themselves as a sort of mini-conglomerate, coordinated by a management group elected

from the member enterprises. These units are either vertically or horizontally integrated and can send members from one enterprise to the other as the requirements of the market and the production system change. They are able to use a common marketing apparatus and have the production capacity to retain a significant portion of a given market. This started initially by a set of enterprises in the same market banding together for intra-enterprise cooperation. Now Mondragon develops such systems from the start, having learned its benefits.

If one enters a Mondragon factory, one of the more obvious features is a European style coffee bar, occupied by members taking a break. It is emblematic of the work style, which is serious but relaxed. Mondragon productivity is very high -- higher than in its capitalist counterparts. Efficiency, measured as the ratio of use of resources -- capital and labor -- to output, is in particular far higher than in comparable capitalist factories. These are the obvious indicators; it is less easy to measure members' sense of commitment. One indication perhaps is that a couple of years ago the membership of the system voted on a proposition to deduct a further 17% from their internal accounts in order to create more jobs. This was during a bad recession in which in the Basque area as a whole there was 18% unemployment during which time Mondragon not only had no unemployment (it has never laid a member off) but continued to expand. The measure narrowly missed passing but it was to come up for a second vote. I do not know the final result.

One of the most striking indications of the effectiveness of the Mondragon system is that the Empressarial Division of Mondragon has continued to develop an average of four cooperatives a year, each with about 400 members. None of these have ever failed. This amazing record can be compared with business start-ups in this country 94% of which fail within the first five years. I have seen a feasibility study for a new enterprise. It is an impressive book-length document, containing demographics, sociological analysis of the target population, market analysis, product information -- just about everything relevant. When a new prospective cooperative comes to Mondragon seeking help, they are told to elect a leadership. This leadership studies at the Empressarial Division for two years before they are allowed to start the cooperative, learning every aspect of their business, and of the operation of the cooperative.

Mondragon is not utopia. While it does not produce weapons, useless luxury goods, or things that pollute the environment, it does produce standard industrial products using a recognizable technology of production. It does not practise job rotation, and management is not directly elected from the floor -- for good reason, since experiments that have tried this have not worked. Members vary in the nature of their commitment. In fact there is something of a split in Mondragon between those who see Mondragon as a model for the world and those who prefer to keep a low profile and have no interest in proselytizing beyond their confines. Mondragon still remembers the heritage of Franco, when the low profile was essential to survival.

Mondragon has also been faulted for failing to produce mainly for local consumption. It is in the manufacturing, not community development business, and while it creates jobs, its products are exported all over the world. It has exported machine tool factories to eastern European countries, to Portugal and to Algiers; a Mondragon furniture factory is now operating in New York State. Mondragon does not export its system with the factories however; they are simply products, bought and run by local owners. In general, it makes little attempt to convert the heathens; at present, it is swamped by visitors from all over the world, and it finds this hard enough to deal with without going out and actively spreading the word.

Nevertheless, Mondragon has awakened worldwide interest. The Mitterand government has a special cabinet post for the development of cooperatives, the result of its contact with Mondragon. In Wales, the Welsh Trade Union Council is engaged in developing a system of cooperatives patterned after Mondragon. In England, the Job Ownership Movement has developed a number of large cooperatives on the Mondragon model. Progressives in the Catholic Church, seeing Mondragon as an alternative to both capitalism and communism, have helped develop industrial cooperatives in Milwaukee, in Detroit and here in Boston this writer worked with the local archdiocese to develop a system of cooperatives based on the same model.

Why does Mondragon work so well? Part of the answer lies in the unique culture of the Basque region. Members of the staff of Mondragon who I have talked with (the staff of Ikerlan, the research institute, and of ULARCO, the first of the mini-conglomerates) have doubts about whether the model can be exported, arguing that the cohesiveness and

communitarian traditions of the Basque culture alone make it possible. But Anna Gutierrez Johnson, a Peruvian sociologist who has studied Mondragon extensively, believes that basically it is the organizational pattern that makes the whole system work, and this is exportable. I share her belief, but also believe that in the United States its culture of individualism and adversary relations is a major impediment. Workers have little ideological consciousness in this country; that is a plus in one way because the secret of Mondragon is above all organizational, not ideological: it is 'how to' knowledge that makes it work.

But it is also true that workers have bought into the capitalist system and often see work as a ticket into the middle class, certainly not the basis for creating a revolution. Yet Mondragon is revolutionary, for its structure of democratic governance with worker ownership and control challenges the capitalist system at its very heart. Where capitalism awards profit and control both to capital, and hires labor, Mondragon awards profit and control to labor and in the process has developed a worker-centered culture which rather than infantilizing, empowers. Mondragon members are citizens of a worker commonwealth, with the full rights that citizenship confers. This can best be seen in the steps that have been taken to make the formal system of participation into a working reality: different systems of leadership have evolved, and with it, a growing sense of teamwork (a furniture factory now operates completely through work teams). Thus the formal system has led to the ongoing evolution of a democratic process which is the real indicator of its success in revolutionizing the relations of production.

Also, Mondragon is Gramscian in its capacity to create a hegemony -- a total system where one can learn, work, shop, and live within a cooperative environment. In such an environment motivation is high because members share an overall organizational culture which integrates material and moral incentives, and which extends into every aspect of life -- the workplace, the community, education, consumption, the family. A member of the Empresserial Division has underlined the uniqueness of Mondragon viewed as a total system, pointing out that this system goes far beyond what can be found in the Basque culture. The proof of this is to be found in the efforts needed to socialize new workers into the system; the simple fact of being Basque is hardly enough to guarantee effective participation.

Perhaps one of the most brilliant achievement of the Mondragon organizational system is the way in which it has combined collective

ownership with the incentives of individual ownership in a mixed system which recognizes both the individual and the collective side of human motivation. The system of individual accounts with automatic loan-back, along with the partitioning of the surplus into an individual component and a collective component represents a method of giving the worker a sense of individual ownership along with a sense of collective participation in an organization which provides more than simply a meal ticket, even as it expects more than simply job performance.

A strong argument can be made for the importance of creating Mondragons if one is to move toward social liberation. Its systems approach to job creation confronts the problems of economic organization and development head on, managing at once to create freedom in work and also enough jobs to have a powerful impact on a regional economy. Until it happened, it was easy to write off experiments in economic democracy as marginal and unrealistic essays in utopianism, totally irrelevant to the task of affecting any sizeable portion of an existing economy. This can no longer be said, and hence both the state socialist and the capitalist arguments for the economic necessity of oppressive work are given the lie.

Moreover, Mondragon contains an important lesson: it demonstrates that to achieve freedom in work a high level of organizational skill is needed, and that when such skills are present, the traditional opposition of democracy and efficiency vanish, and the two reinforce rather than oppose each other. Mondragon is important because it serves as a model of how this can be done. Here, ideological debate gives way to concrete know-how and another false dilemma bites the dust. Formal organization engaged with modern technologies, entirely apart from the further coercions of capitalist ownership, contains pressures toward a machine form of organization which mirrors the mass delivery apparatus, whether it be service or production oriented. This is true because of the large scale and the productivity requirements; these pressures are greatest in the case of mass production.

Taming this beast thus represents an organizational challenge which must be met if one is to create freedom in work. This type of organization, moreover, is central to advanced industrial societies. It would be nice, utopian fashion, to simply be able to leap over the problem and go back to small scale craft production, thereby admittedly eliminating piles of semi-useless junk. But the first step in deciding what is to be produced or not produced is to regain control over the system. What should or should not

be produced is after all a relative decision, to be democratically arrived at. If the control is there, people may indeed decide in good time that mass production simply is not worth the effort -- or they may not.

With control of the production process one can then at least begin the process of educating consumers to better products, or less products, or craft products, or whatever one happens to feel is an improvement over the present system. Moreover, one cannot change a whole culture in a day, and if one wishes to wean people from an over-dependence on cars, for example, one way is to build better trains, which is at least a step beyond building more fuel-efficient cars. The fact that one cannot do everything should not be made into an argument for doing nothing.

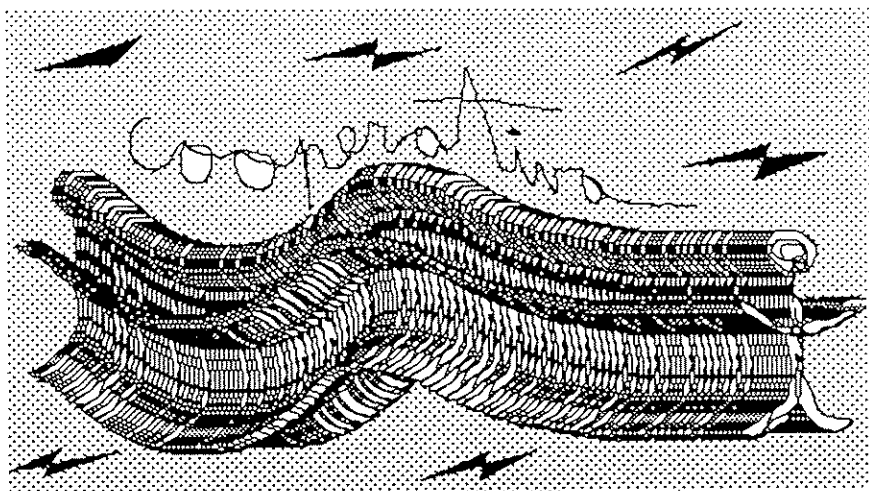
I recall a debate a few years ago in the pages of "Social Anarchism" where Len Krimerman described his efforts at creating a poultry processing cooperative. In the main his anarchist respondents were horrified: he had borrowed money from the government! (The Small Business Administration). Also, he had foremen and supervisors, rather than pure and total self-government! He trafficked with capitalist distributors! The whole thing was a desecration of anarchist principles, being centrally involved with capitalism, hierarchy and the state. This is of course an old debate, but it is reminiscent of the Marxist's argument that until the "objective conditions" for revolution exist, nothing can (and hence need) be done.

One can indeed preach purity, but talk is cheap, and moreover, people know that. The significance of Mondragon is twofold: it represents a positive vision of freedom in work, a community that is democratically controlled by its members. The ideal of democracy, which everyone gives lip service to, here is actually practised. But it also represents something that works, and that in turn constitutes a statement about human nature, establishing beyond controversy that people can manage complex social tasks via democratic organization. If a picture is worth a thousand words, an effective working model is worth at least a thousand pictures.

Probably the most telling criticism of utopian thinking is that it flies in the face of human nature, which has powerful propensities for evil as well as good. This argument is not one that can be settled in the abstract. The value of Mondragon is that it speaks to it in specific and concrete ways: whereas the Webbs and others have long argued against the viability of worker cooperatives on the basis that they will in the end simply degenerate into capitalist enterprises -- and this is, after all, a statement about the weakness and fallibility of human nature -- Mondragon has

clearly shown that this is not true. Not only does Mondragon work, but it works a lot better than its capitalist counterparts; it works better and it grows faster. By showing that one can combine democracy with efficiency, it gives the lie to a basic article of capitalist dogma about human nature, to wit that people are naturally lazy and irresponsible and will only work when told to and given the twin incentives of the carrot and the stick.

Another objection has been raised: anarchism has been periodically plagued by what has been called "the tyranny of structurelessness." Structure is brainlessly equated with hierarchy and bureaucracy, and hence the complex organizational structure of a system such as Mondragon is written off out of hand. But structurelessness breeds tyranny: informal cliques develop, hidden leaders emerge who wield power behind the cloak of an espoused equality. This too says something about human nature. Mondragon is worth studying because it works, and the argument can be made that utopian theory must always confront the practical since the burden of proof is on the theorist. The problem with capitalism and more generally coercive industrial systems of whatever persuasion is not that they don't work; they deliver the goods, and in the process grind up human beings. The only answer to this state of affairs is to prove that a better system also works; theory alone simply will not do. And, if we wish to claim that something better than Mondragon needs to be built, then it is incumbent on us to do it.



THE BUSINESS OF GETTING DRESSED

All of a sudden
when I wake up in the morning
I remember myself:
I open my eyes discreetly
and proceed to get dressed.
The first thing to do is to put on the face
of a fine upstanding person.
Next, go on to the good
habits, filial love,
morality, decorum
and marital fidelity:
I leave the memories out
until last.
Like an expert, I wash
my solid citizen's face,
robed in my deteriorating expectations:
I clap words into my mouth,
buff up goodness and wear it like a hat
with an ever so pleasant look
in my eyes.

From the closet I select the ideas
that I wish to show off today
and without wasting time
I pop them into my head.
Finally,
I climb into my shoes and
start walking. Going along,
I hum the song I sing to
my daughter:
"If to your window
the twentieth century flies,
treat it with love and kindness,
for it's me, in my disguise."

- Maria Mercedes Carranza

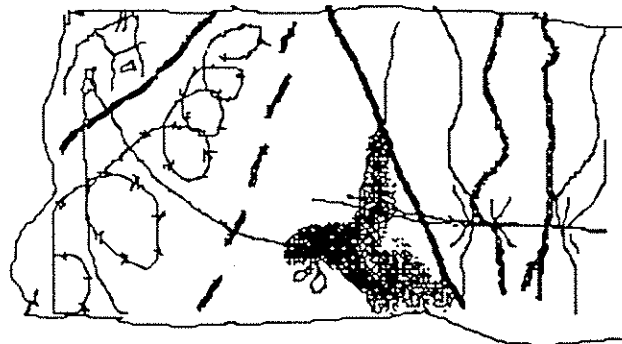
THE BASEMENT

The way to the basement is fraught with danger.
The stairs moan and creak
and occasionally steps are missing.
The basement is as dark as a rainy day,
and going down the stairs perfectly,
I still might break my neck.
I descend with a candle, feeling my way
among the shadows.
The basement is a tomb. After the basement
there is nothing. And today I have come to the basement
after all these years.
I gag in the stagnant air.

A rat runs between my legs.
The light of the candle trembles, but in
this basement there are no bats, only bones.
I put the candle down,
tie a bandana over my nose,
and pull out my instruments.
There are books and manuscripts in the basement
and broken music boxes and a Louis XIV chair
and a Mona Lisa with no eyes and two fangs.
In the basement,
we accumulate so many things.
Above the basement there is a house
and I can feel its weight,
so I come down to the basement alone
to see what holds it up.
This is only a dark room
like any hell, and like any
hell, memories live here.
I raise the broom and spin around
as if I were Russian roulette, but the tears in my eyes
are not daughters of this dust.
I am here in the basement.

If I shout -HELP- no one would hear me
except the hysterical rats and the dozing spiders.
The basement is a prison, a strait
jacket, and this is your house
and you have put me in this basement.
I am that prisoner who moans and cires out-
you tighten the screws while
I creak in the light of the candle,
exactly like the stairs. What am I doing here?
Where is the way out? Eyeing the cockroaches smashed
against the wall, why am I scrubbing these floors,
working like a man possessed
working this basement floor?

Jaime Manrique Ardila



THE ANARCHIST MOMENT

by John Clark

Black Rose Books, Montreal (1984)

Reviewed

by

Clym Yeobright

People write reviews to tell other people whether they liked a book or not and why. So I might as well start by saying that I liked this book. *The Anarchist Moment* by John Clark is generally well written, well-structured, well-argued and informative. Above all I found it thought-provoking. This is not to say that I agree with or appreciate all of John Clark's positions, but that the book is a good one and I recommend it.

As I see it this book is essentially John Clark's explication of the social ecology anarchism of Murray Bookchin. This is not to say that Clark is simply a follower of Bookchin but that by and large his book is a fleshing out of points left lean by Bookchin. Yet the book remains of interest even to those who disagree vigorously with Bookchin's approach to anarchism, for John Clark is not Murray Bookchin and he does bring much that is new and interesting in his exposition.

The authors purpose is simply stated: "My purpose in this work is therefore to present a critique of classical radical theory, and to show that critical social thought requires a new vision of the self, society, and nature...a cultural politics founded on an ecological, organicist word

view". (p. 16) By and large radical social thought today is considered to be either marxism or some variant of marxism. Thus any radical critique which is not marxist has to differentiate itself from marxism as a point of reference. On practical grounds, for those of us in North America this ought to be simple, since there is no large or influential marxist movement here. Everywhere marxism in power is dictatorial. Why? John Clark, following Bookchin and many, many, others, claims this situation is no historical accident. It is a direct result of the very essence of marxism's philosophical position's. Most North Americans would, I think, have no difficulty agreeing with this. But Clark contends that marxism is more akin to contemporary capitalist technocracy than to truly radical thought, which would surprise most North Americans. The basis of this kinship is that both marxism and capitalism share at root an attitude toward nature in which nature is treated as an object to be exploited for the presumed good of humanity; which is to say that marxism, like capitalism, is founded upon an ideology of domination. Thus marxism, despite its noble rhetoric of freedom and its often admirable intent, must have as practical end a society based on domination, and in fact a more blatant and ruthless one than under capitalism.

Clark argues these points and differentiates marxism from anarchism in chapters on "Marx, Bakunin, and Social

Revolution". This is a reasonable approach since historically anarchism defined or began to define itself largely through Bakunin's disagreements with the vastly more sophisticated and verbose positions of Marx and his followers. In the following chapter Clark extends this critique to Lenin and Trotsky, showing them to be as well "ideologists of high technology". (p.110) In later chapters Clark also exposes the "neo-marxists", the updaters and humanizers of marxism. to the same critique. For the same reason - that is, the failure to see domination, especially domination of nature, at the root of marxism - all these attempts, though well-intentioned, fail. Marxism remains a philosophy of power.

If not marxism, then why anarchism? And if anarchism, what sort of anarchism? In two chapters - "What is Anarchism?" and "Anarchism and the present world crisis" - John Clark attempts a brief answer. I found this chapter on the present world crisis utopian and ingenuous, the former being a criticism which probably would not trouble either Clark or Bookchin. I did find his general definition of anarchism to be an interesting one, interesting enough to quote it here:

For a political theory to be called "anarchism" it must contain 1) a view of a ideal, non-coercive, non-authoritarian society; 2) a criticism of existing society and its institutions based on this anti-authoritarian ideal; 3) a view of human nature that justifies the hope for

significant progress toward the ideal; and 4) a strategy for change, involving immediate institution of no-coercive, non-authoritarian, and decentralist alternatives. (pp.126-127)

Having settled in his mind what anarchism is and that it is relevant to contemporary social problems, and having disposed of marxism, John Clark comes to what is for me the most important part of this book, the chapters titled "Ecology, Technology, and Respect for Nature" and "The Social Ecology of Murray Bookchin," in which he provides a preliminary sketch of just what sort of "new vision of the self, society, and nature" he has in mind.

The first of these chapters is concerned with the possibility of establishing a basis in nature for a anarchist, ecological ethics. Humans, John Clark argues, have separated nature into two parts, "one of which (our own species) is deserving of moral consideration, while the other ("external nature") is of purely instrumental value." (p. 191) The result is that man's attitude toward nature becomes one based on domination, of nature as an instrument, a tool to be used. Technology is the means we use to dominate and exploit nature. This situation has spawned its own critics, but most criticism is based on humanistic foundations, "that we should preserve natural resources because they are necessary for our survival, because they are aesthetically pleasing, because they have recreational value, because they

will be beneficial for future generations, or because doing so will maximize profit or economic growth in the long run. In other words, our regard for nature is grounded in its potential for use by human beings for various human purposes." (p.192)

These humanist arguments can be effective and are all well and good, but while they mollify the effects of instrumentalism, they fail to fundamentally challenge it because they implicitly share the same basic assumptions, namely the ethical division mentioned above. Thus the domination at the root of this attitude remains untouched. John Clark wishes to go beyond humanism and explore "whether there are any grounds for granting non-human nature any moral status, so that it cannot legitimately be assimilated entirely into this realm of instrumentality." (p.192) He suggests we might find these grounds by coming to "understand more adequately the relation between ourselves and the rest of nature, thus we might come to find value in non-human external nature, that is, external nature might be seen as possessing goodness. If we attribute moral goodness to human nature, and if the goodness of human nature depends or rests upon its interaction with external nature, "then we are required by the demands of consistency to give moral recognition to the similar goods existing to all levels of nature." (p. 195) This attribution of moral character to external nature does not mean that humans may not interfere in

external nature in seeking the realization of human goods; we do after all make such choices and must make them. But it does provide a moral standard against which such interference may be judged. "If, as we are assuming, we are to give precedence to those goods realized at higher levels in the hierarchy of nature, then there is reason to give highest consideration among natural systems with which we have a practical relationship to that of the biosphere. If we can recognize a good for the biosphere, we should grant it priority over less comprehensive goods, and guide our actions accordingly." (pp.195-196)

The end result is that morality becomes ecology, or at least to a large extent it does so. "If the ecological crisis has resulted from our lack of recognition of the continuity between human social, cultural, and technological systems and the ecosystem within which these have evolved, a moral crisis has arisen from our failure to recognize the relation between our own good and the system of goods of which it is a part." (p.196) Moral action becomes ecological action, which is as we shall see anarchism.

This is a fascinating sketch. The idea of an objective ethics based on nature, the "natural law", is not a new one and has seen many formulations from the Greeks and Romans (Italians, that is) through the Middle Ages to the present day. All such formulations have by and large been found wanting; yet the idea of a natural law still persists. Clark's admittedly brief

outline of what such an ethics might be remains to be filled in, expanded, and corrected. It seems to me that if ethics is to be rooted in ecology, then ethics must be to a large extent become dependant upon the current state of science at any given time. Many ethical questions thus become scientific ones. But in terms of issues like pollution or nuclear reactors, this is no great problem. In terms of individual behavior I cannot see where there will be any immediately startling practical changes. I presume that ecological behavior means being good to each other. but then that is merely to state the Golden Rule in other words.

In such considerations of ethics I am always reminded of comments made by the writer William Golding, hardly original to him as he would admit, in an essay titled "Utopias and Anti-utopias: "With bad people, hurting, unco-operative, selfish people no social system will work. With good people, loving, co-operative, unselfish people, any social system will work." (A moving Target, p.184)

In the same vein, in another place, Golding commented on the probability of there being a majority of such good people. No ethical or social philosophy, he contended, can succeed without taking into account the penchant or evil lying so close to the surface of civilized humanity.

Before the Second World War I believed in the perfectibility of social man; that a correct structure of society would produce goodwill; and that therefore you could remove all social ills by a

reorganization of society. It is possible that today I believe something of the same again; but after the war I did not because I was unable to. I had discovered what one man could do to another. I am not talking of one man killing another with a gun, or dropping a bomb on him or blowing him up or torpedoing him. I am thinking of the vileness beyond all words that went on, year after year, in the totalitarian states. It is bad enough to say that so many Jews were exterminated in this way and that, so many people liquidated - lovely, elegant word - but there were things done during that period from which I still have to avert my mind lest I should be physically sick. They were not done by the head hunters of New Guinea, or by some primitive tribe in the Amazon. They were done, skillfully, coldly, by educated men, doctors, lawyers, by men with a tradition of civilization behind them, to beings of their own kind. I do not want to elaborate upon this, but I must say that anyone who moved through those years without understanding that man produces evil as a bee produces honey, must have been blind or wrong in the head. Let me take a parrallel from a social situation. We are commonly dressed, and commonly behave as if we had no genitalia. Taboos and prohibitions have grown up round that very necessary part of the human anatomy. But in sickness, the whole structure of man must be exhibited to the doctor. When the occasion is important enough, we admit to what we have. It

seems to me that in nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century society of the West, similar taboos grew up round the nature of man. He was supposed not to have in him the sad fact of his own cruelty and lust. When these capacities emerged into action they were thought aberrant. Social systems, political systems were composed, detached from the real nature of man. They were what one might call political symphonies. They could perfect most men, and at the least, reduce aberrance. Why, then, have they never worked? How did the idealist concepts of primitive socialism turn at last into Stalinism? How could the political and philosophical idealism of Germany produce as its ultimate fruit, the rule of Adolf Hitler? My own conviction grew that men were putting the cart before the horse. They were looking at the system rather than the people. It seemed to me that man's capacity for greed, his innate cruelty and selfishness, was being hidden behind a kind of pair of political pants. I believed then, that man was sick - not exceptional men, but average man." (The Hot Gates, pp.85 -86)

John Clark would obviously answer that the root of the problem lies in the fact that domination is the basis of civilization. But his answer to the problem is tautological and leaves unanswered the further question, whence this domination? "Human nature" is a much disputed phrase. Everyone disagrees as to its meaning. But it seems to me that any ethics or politics that fails to take human nature

realistically into account will have some serious practical difficulties or else be clothed in that "pair of political pants".

Perhaps widespread moral corruption is the best argument for the reduction of state and corporate power...and perhaps revolutionary power. In any event the recognition of humanity's penchant for evil seems to me the strongest argument against the sort of utopian thinking Clark and Bookchin espouse. Clark's ethical sketch seems to me to lack what could be called an "existential" dimension, by which I mean that I fail to see how it would apply in many individual instances of moral choice, at least in a manner different from some other existing ethical systems. Take abortion for example. If life is a good, and if a foetus is alive, and if the life of the mother is not in question, then how could one favor abortion as a moral choice? It seems to me that a Clarkian natural law would protect the sanctity of life virtually above all else. Yet for the woman making the choice many other factors would have to be weighed perhaps, in addition to the ecological principles involved. Thus it seems to me an ecological ethic would be of little help save to proscribe an abortion.

Finally, as an amusing aside, I would like to observe that John Clark has flirted with but apparently avoided what the ethical philosopher G.E. Moore termed the "naturalistic fallacy," no mean feat for an ecological ethician. John Clark is unrestrained in his praise of Murray

Bookchin. "To put it bluntly, anarchist thought has remained at best a melange of brilliant insight and theoretical naiserie prior to the work of Bookchin and those who are building on his foundation." (p. 202) He considers Bookchin's work, *The Ecology of Freedom*, to be "a major achievement, destined to become a classic of contemporary social thought." (p. 215) This may or may not prove to be the case, and one may or may not share Clark's enthusiasm for Bookchin, but nonetheless the points Clark emphasizes in his consideration of Bookchin's work are more than worthwhile. He says, "Bookchin's single most important contribution to social theory is his effort to ground social analysis in a coherent and comprehensive theory of nature," (p. 202) I think this is correct: it is correct as an evaluation of Bookchin's work, and it is his most important contribution, however unclearly Bookchin may often express it, the effects of which ought to weigh heavily in anarchist thought of our time.

John Clark's examination of Bookchin basically centers around two of Bookchin's books, *Toward an Ecological Society* and *The Ecology of Freedom*. His discussion is informed, fair, and erudite. It parallels, or perhaps better, complements, albeit in a different form and certainly less critically, much of what I had written in my essay on Bookchin in *Black Rose* #8, though it was written before the publication of *The Ecology of Freedom*, in which Bookchin deals with some of the critical

points I had raised. I agree with Clark that this is Bookchin's major work and that it is important, but I have many hesitations about the manner of the expression of the arguments in the book.

Largely, this is due to what I feel is Bookchin's uncritical acceptance of Hegelian philosophical methodology and in particular its dialectic. Clark himself apparently shares this acceptance and his book is replete with references to "dialectical interaction" and so on, a phrasing which to me tends to muddle things rather than clarify them. As an example of what I mean, the last chapter of *The Anarchist Moment* (admittedly the densest and hardest to understand in the book) contains the following:

As Bookchin has pointed out, following Hegel, the nature of a phenomenon is in an important sense equivalent to the history of the phenomenon. The self can only be understood as an organic totality with the larger organic totalities of human culture and of nature, and with which it has a dialectical relationship of growth and development. True, the self cannot be thought of as having any-character apart from its natural and social relationships; yet it can at the same time have its own immanent, historically shaped telos, which is integral to its self-creative dialectical interaction with the rest of nature and society. (p.234)

What Clark means to say I think is this. The individual develops throughout his or her life. Each person exists in a

social and natural milieu with which he or she interacts, affecting the milieu as it affects him or her. Despite the fact of this social and natural setting and interaction, each individual is unique, with his or her own personality, goals, and activity. There is no need for the use of Clark's Hegelianized language to make the point; in fact the Hegelian language obfuscates the thought and seemingly tries to render a relatively simple, straightforward idea exotic and somehow more profound. I tried re-reading the same passage, this time leaving out the word "dialectical" entirely, and scratching the phrase "immanent, historically shaped telos", replacing it with "individuality" or "personality" and found things much clearer and more sensible. Perhaps others might find this also to be the case and I would be curious to learn if this is so. My purpose is not to argue against the use of difficult or specialized language or to argue that all profound thought ought to be simply expressed. I am arguing that in Clark's case, and also in Bookchin's, there is no intrinsic need for the use of such language, which so often mystifies and muddles rather than clarifies.

I would like to take another, more striking example, that of Bookchin's argument as to the rationality of nature, an argument which Clark paraphrases in his chapter on Bookchin. Human beings can make sense of natural phenomena. Nature is capable of being understood by reason. Hegel took this fact and argued from it that humans can understand

nature because nature itself is inherently rational. His formulation was the famous, "The real is rational and the rational is real." Hegel went further and claimed that human reason itself was nature striving to become rational. There was individual reason, yes, but each individual reason was part of the "moment" of total reason trying to express itself through nature of which we human are a part.

If this seems unclear or muddled, that is because it is unclear and muddled. In **Toward An Ecological Society** Bookchin expresses essentially the same thought in this manner: "Inasmuch as human beings are themselves products of the natural world, human self-consciousness could be described in philosophical terms as nature rendered 'self-conscious'". (p. 109) Expressed so briefly, this statement is virtually unsupported, a mere play on words. In **The Ecology of Freedom** Bookchin attempts to support the expression. Reason was once considered by the Greeks as Logos. Logos was immanent, inherent in nature as its organizing and motivating principle. Clark, paraphrasing Bookchin again, says: "From the epistemological standpoint, reason means speculative knowledge, comprehension of the nature of this Logos. Yet such knowledge is only possible because of the rationality inherent in reality itself." (p. 216) The idea is obvious, that reality is understandable because we can grasp its inherent rationality, being part of that rationality ourselves. Nature, being

rational, is further seen as striving toward comprehension of its own rationality. It does this through human beings, the highest form of rationality of which we know. "In the scheme of the evolutionary development of subjectivity, humanity is 'nature rendered self-conscious'". (p. 218)

As Clark admits, there are very serious problems in proving such a point of view, problems which he does not elaborate. I would like to briefly point out that it takes what amounts to a leap of faith to jump from "humans can understand nature" to "all nature is rational" to "humanity is nature rendered self-conscious." The argument as presented is based more on word play than on real evidence. (One might also question the liberal use of the notion of teleology in much of Clark's and Bookchin's arguments.) That Clark does not examine the objections to his arguments in some detail in this book is a pity since what is in question is the fundament of the ecological anarchism both he and Bookchin would like to establish.

But this is always a problem with so-called dialectical thought, at least as far as I have experienced it, namely that linguistic "tricks" and confusion too often take the place of real argument. It is a danger that I feel that both John Clark and Murray Bookchin at times fail to avoid. Yet despite such criticisms, Clark is basically correct. **The Ecology of Freedom** is indeed both a good book and Bookchin's magnum opus. Curiously, in considering

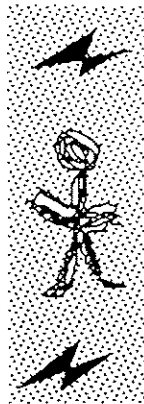
the book Clark does not mention what was for me the most immediately striking feature of **The Ecology of Freedom**, that is, Bookchin's abandonment of his earlier formulation of his theory of "post-scarcity anarchism." Bookchin now seeks to completely ground his critique in an ecology, a philosophy of nature, and the attempt is a praiseworthy one.

Two chapters in this book seem to me both curious and somewhat out of place. One is the already mentioned dense and murky last chapter. Here John Clark seems to be arguing that progressive and truly radical opposition to contemporary society must be cultural rather than economic or class based and must avoid the temptation to either seize or reform the power structure. In the first chapter of **The Anarchist Moment** he argued the same points in a much clearer and more compelling manner. There he set out what he calls the "libertarian problematic", by which I suppose him to mean how anarchism needs to be recast to face the challenges of the contemporary world and to learn from the past. "The libertarian problematic today is, of course, to develop a coherent, systematic and thoroughly critical view of reality, and a practice adequate to transform reality in accord with this vision." (p. 27) This may at first blush seem to be nothing more than a fancy rephrasing of what might be called the "old problematic" but, as I hope has been shown, John Clark means that we need to establish this ecological critique.

The other out-of-place chapter is the one, "Master Lao and the Anarchist Prince" in which Clark claims, "Lao Tzu is one of the great anarchist classics. Indeed, there are good reasons to conclude that no important philosophical work of either East or West has ever been so thoroughly pervaded by the anarchist spirit, and that none of the Western political thinkers known as major anarchist theorists...have been nearly as consistent in drawing out the implications of the anarchist perspective." (p. 165)

Whether this is true or not I cannot say, but John Clark is certainly willing and able to argue his case. Why Clark might be attracted to Taoism can be understood. As the editor of *The Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, the main work Clark here uses, says of the Lao-Tzu: "As the way of life, it denotes simplicity, spontaneity, tranquillity, weakness, and most important of all, non-action (wu-wei). By the latter "inactivity" is not meant literally but rather "taking no action that is contrary to Nature" - in other words letting Nature take its own course." (p. 136) And again: "The book advocates not only non-action, but also practical tactics for action. It teaches submission, but strongly opposes oppressive government. The philosophy of the Lao-Tzu is not for the hermit, but for the sage-ruler, who does not desert the world but rules it with non-interference. Taoism is therefore not a philosophy of withdrawal. Man is to follow Nature but in doing so he

is not eliminated; instead, his nature is fulfilled." (p. 137) Exactly how Taoism relates to the idea of an anarchist ecological ethics is still unclear to me, unless of course Clark is hinting that Taoism is that ethics. Perhaps he will expand on this matter some day. I certainly hope he does, and hope as well that should he do so he not title it "The Tao of Bookchin." My confrontation with *The Anarchist Moment* has sharpened, expanded, and enriched my understanding of anarchism. One really couldn't ask for more than that. Thus I recommend this thoughtful and provocative book to our readers just as I would also recommend the work of Bookchin. *The Anarchist Moment* is a worthy addition to the libertarian literary corpus.



Last writes:

- The Charles H. Kerr Company continues to publish well-designed, informative books on radical topics. One of their most recent offerings is the handsomely illustrated *Haymarket Scrapbook* (Chicago, \$14.95), edited by Dave Roediger & Franklin Rosemont. It is a valuable addition to anarchist history, published on the centennial of this epochal incident.

- During the period since BR last appeared, several long-time militants, all at least in their eighties and all from that older international anarchism which Rossella DiLeo alluded to in her article, have died in the United States. We knew all four as friends, contributors, and supporters of BR, and we would like to acknowledge them briefly, belatedly, but fondly.

Marcus Graham died in California in December 1985. Marcus left Rumania as a youth and came to North America sometime after the turn of the century. It was here that he became active in the anarchist movement. His many activities as a writer, propagandist, and militant soon brought him to the attention of the authorities, who began a life-long series of struggles against him. They first tried to deport him during the "Red Scare" of 1919-1920, but failed when they could not discover where to deport him to or a country to accept him. (In a last desperate attempt the U.S. Government actually offered to aid Graham enter any country of his choice...illegally, if need be!) Marcus eventually made his way to California where, with the help of some Italian comrades, he began the journal *MAN!* (1933-40). The authorities continued to try to deport Marcus and others connected with the journal - unsuccessfully - and to stop its publication. The intimidation of the journal's printers by the authorities finally led to its demise. Marcus continued his activities as a writer throughout his life, writing for such journals as *L'Adunata dei Refrattari*, *Resistance*, *Match*, *Black Flag*, and *Anarchy*. He edited two valuable volumes: *An Anthology of Revolutionary Poetry* (1929) and the more recent *Man!*, an anthology of writings from that journal (Cienfuegos Press, 1980). At times, Marcus seemed to argue as much with comrades as with the authorities (Kropotkin, Goldman, Rocker, the *Freie Arbeiter Stimme* among others), but, uncomfortable or unreasonable as he may have been in certain situations, the force of his convictions was never something to be ignored. It will be a blander world without cantankerous Marcus.

Ahrne Thorne was the opposite of Graham in temperament - gentle in manner, moderate in tone and argument. Born December 1904 in Lodz, Poland, he arrived in the U.S. via Paris, London, and Canada. In Toronto he had been a close associate of Emma Goldman during her final years. He came to New York City in 1940 where he worked as a typesetter and printer.

A frequent contributor to the Yiddish-language anarchist journal, the *Freie Arbeiter Stimme* (The Free Voice of Labor), he was also its final editor when it ceased publication in 1977 after "eighty-seven years of a fighting existence". Ahrne, seemingly in such good health, was suddenly stricken with cancer and died in December 1985. His good advice, his warm friendship, his *amiability* will be missed greatly by those who knew him.

Ernesto Bonomini died this past fall in Florida. A militant anarchist and fervent anti-fascist, he had left Italy for France after the assumption of power by Mussolini in 1922. In Paris he was among the first to strike back at the treacherous tentacles of the fascist tyranny. Later he went to Spain where he fought in the war (alongside Camillo Berneri) against the fascist forces of Franco. After its tragic end he came to America where he continued to work within the movement, largely by supporting the activities of the journal, *L'Aduanta dei Refrattri*. Like so many of that remarkable band of anarchists of his era who fought so hard for freedom throughout the world, the full story of his life will probably never receive its just due in the history of that struggle.

Enrico Arrigoni - or **BRAND** as he was known among his English-speaking comrades - died most recently this past December 1986 in New York City. He was born, 1894, in northern Italy, a short distance from the city of Milan. A dedicated anti-militarist, Brand left Italy in 1916 to avoid the draft for the World War. A long odyssey followed, which led him through Switzerland, Germany, Soviet Russia, Hungary, Austria, France, Spain, Cuba, and Argentina, before it ended in New York City. He returned again to Europe, to Spain, where he, too, fought against Franco. Brand was a prolific writer and propagandist throughout his life: he edited the individualist journal *Eresia!* (NYC, 1928-29; 1931-32); besides his political writings he wrote many plays and satires, many of which he published himself; a great lover of music and opera, he also composed many songs. Much of his own remarkable story is told in his final book, *Freedom, My Dream*, (1986) which came out shortly before his death. (This book is available from the Libertarian Book Club (339 Lafayette St., #202, NYC, NY 10012) an anarchist group, of which Brand was an active member until his death. In the film, *Anarchism in America*, there is a memorable image of Brand which I think he would like to be remembered by: he is seen running through a seemingly empty field, singing one of his odes to freedom, when a sudden movement of the camera reveals him to be at the foot of the statue of Liberty....

