

BLACK ROSE #1  
FALL - WINTER 82

Contents	2
From the editor	
A Reply to Clym Yeobright and Peter Kardas <u>Murray Bookchin</u>	4
Poem <u>Ted Thomas</u>	15
Walking into anarchy? <u>Gary Campanella</u>	16
Kenneth Rexroth (1906-1982)	
Anarchism and the workplace Democratization Strategy <u>George Benelli</u>	20
	25
Last Rites	47

## The Shock of the Knew

*The paradox of man's condition in the modern world is that the more fully he recognizes his right and duty to be his own master, the more completely he becomes the passive object of a technology and bureaucracy whose complexities he cannot hope to understand.*

— Robert Paul Wolff  
In Defense of Anarchism

Readers of *Black Rose* may have noticed that the editorial collective has rarely organized the offerings in the magazine around a single issue or theme. With this edition of the magazine, however, it seems that our contributors have focussed on a special set of questions without any guidance or suggestion from the *Black Rose* collective. Whether or not it is the effect of the Zeitgeist created by the likes of Ronald Reagan, Alexander Haig, James Watt and the engineers of Route 128 and the Silicon Valley, it seems that there is a special interest among anarchists writing today on the relationship of persons to nature (in the broadest sense) and the uses of reason and knowledge to order the environment. Related to these general ecological concerns is the question of how instrumental reason and knowledge can have power in our lives.

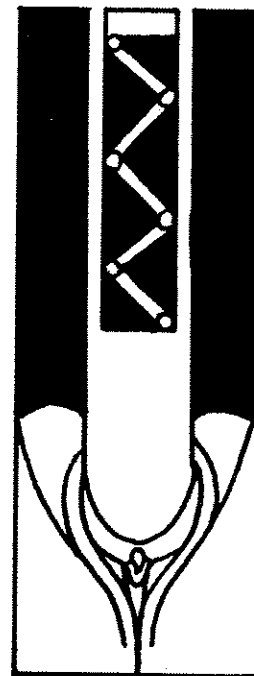
The notion that knowledge and power are somehow related is, of course, not at all a new idea. We find thinkers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, such as Francis Bacon, who clearly saw the relationship between these two forces. The difference, in the case of our own time, is the unbelievable rise in the magnitude of technological knowledge from the time of the seventeenth century, and the corresponding rise of the power to oppress and annihilate. The scope and seriousness of the problem is especially frightening if Michel Foucault is correct when he writes

No body of knowledge can be formed without a system of communications, records, accumulation and displacement which is in itself a form of power and which is linked, in its existence and functioning, to other forms or power. Conversely, no power can be exercised without the extraction, appropriation, distribution or retention of knowledge. On this level, there is not knowledge on one side and society on the other, or science and the state, but only the fundamental forms of knowledge/power.

Thus we witness a rise in chemical technology; at the same time a power is created which can poison the environment or create food for the world's populace. We see the development of a technology which can make an atomic bomb which can destroy millions of people, yet we also observe the deployment of an information system which can limit the use of these weapons and provide scientific background for better educated persons.

It is clear, then, that although there is a symbiotic relationship between knowledge and power, that the combination of these two forces can both serve to liberate and dominate us. As anarchists we must be continually alert to both of these manifestations of knowledge, and we must constantly question, if we are to survive, its authoritarian and destructive uses.

— Julian Knox



# A Reply to Clym Yeobright and Peter Kardas

Murray Bookchin

Two articles have recently appeared—one, by Clym Yeobright in *Black Rose* (Boston), #8, entitled “The Thought of Murray Bookchin” and another by Peter Kardas, “The Workplace and the Community,” presented at the Inaugural Meeting of the Anarchos Institute (Montreal) in June 1982—which essentially criticize my Marxist intellectual pedigree as a disqualifier for my criticisms of Marxism from a theoretical viewpoint. In both cases a common argument is advanced:

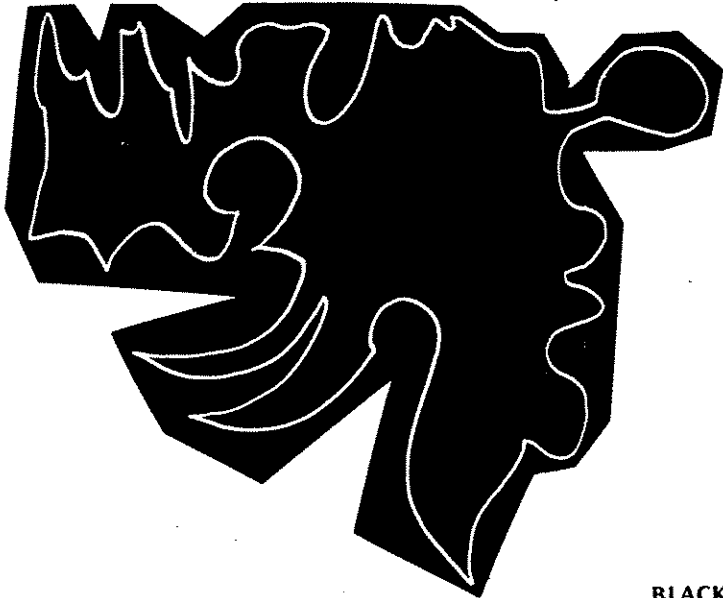
1. “Bookchin” accepts Marx’s view that freedom has material conditions, notably freedom from material scarcity. Without the security, leisure, and control over productive forces that technical advances render possible, the necessary conditions for a nonhierarchical society—not to speak of the sufficient conditions—do not exist. The development of industrial capitalism has now rendered such a post-scarcity society technically possible. Moreover, this technical possibility could have only been achieved through hierarchy and domination, i.e., by using human beings as instruments of production. As Yeobright puts it: “If scarcity made hierarchy and domination necessary, post-scarcity makes them unnecessary and dangerous.” (*Black Rose*, p. 27). Although Kardas’ approach is oriented toward a syndicalist position (notably, the factory is precisely the place where social resistance is either possible or necessary “because the workplace is so authoritarian”), he too advances the argument that “Bookchin” is a crypto-Marxist because he contends, in Kardas’ words, that “All that domination and the agony that accompanied it were necessary to give us the good things that can liberate us today.” But now that domination and hierarchy have reached their “historical limits” (“Bookchin’s” words), the technics which separated us from nature “need to be taken over by a revolutionary humanity” to produce a new free society. (Kardas, p22)

Kardas, I think, also speaks for Yeobright when he declares: “There seems to be very little between Bookchin’s basic perspective here and that of Marx. We find the same emphasis on freedom only being possible after centuries of domination, the same discussion of social relations of production needing to be squared with the material means of production, the same reduction of human beings to unwilling agents of historical forces. Yet when Bookchin is discussing these things in Marx he tears into him with a vengeance.” After which Kardas, even more stridently than Yeobright, cites quotations from my writings in which I criticize Marx for making domination a “precondition” for liberation, centralization a “precondition” for decentralization, capitalism a “precondition” for socialism, etc. Indeed, I find the “patriarchal family, private property, repressive reason, the state, etc. (in Kardas’ words) as having been historically necessary for the realization of freedom.” Kardas, in turn, quotes Yeobright to the effect that “If scarcity does justify hierarchy and domination—and I do not see how Bookchin can avoid this—then I do not see how he can have any compelling ethical criticism of historical abuse”—which would mean that such a position could be used to justify slavery, the subjugation of women, the abuses of the Athenian *polis* and perhaps even the suppression of the anarchists by the Bolsheviks in Spain.

The extrapolations that Kardas and Yeobright make even from such a simplistic and reductionist image of my writings on post-scarcity are not merely overdrawn; they are simply silly. Presumably, I should be an admirer of Genghis Kahn and Tamerlane if I am to take these remarks seriously. And who hasn’t encountered the “historically progressive” function of the Black Death in generating all kinds of technical developments in western Europe due to the shortage of labor that followed in its wake? Even if one were to dogmatically suppose that technical development constituted a precondition for freedom—or, at least, the material security and free time that render freedom a realistic possibility—it certainly would not follow that oppression and repression in all its forms are historically justifiable. Indeed, anyone using an argument that technical development does comprise a precondition for freedom could still make a very compelling moral critique of “civilization” as a history of needless savagery, brutality, inhumanity, and environmental devastation. What is troubling about Marx’s position about technics and its growth is that he condoned entire phases of history as indispensable to the “conquest of

nature" and explicitly brought domination, even hierarchy, into the very making of society as *such*. Engels, certainly encountering no dissent from Marx, was in fact to justify slavery in *Anti-Duhring*—not, incidentally, in the interests of *technical* development but as a *moral* improvement over the proclivity of tribal peoples to slaughter captured prisoners. What is significant about the Marxist position on this matter is that domination—whether historically justifiable or not—is carried lock-stock-and-barrel into the communist future. Certainly Engels could not conceive of a free society without factories hierarchically organized along lines very reminiscent of their present structure and Marx could never divest the "realm of necessity" of its oppressive dimension as an unavoidable attribute of social life per se.

What is more to the point: both Yeobright and Kardas gravely misunderstand my notions of scarcity and post-scarcity even in a work that was written during the climactic years of the sixties when it was patently clear that the New Left and countercultural upsurges were in large part nourished by the material abundance that many sectors of the middle classes enjoyed in North America and western Europe. It would be sheer myopia to ignore the sense of hope that the technical and economic developments of time en-



BLACK ROSE

gendered, and it would have been a grave theoretical, indeed, political, fallacy for radical libertarians not to have fostered this sense of hope in a material as *well* as ethical sense. Are we to suppose that slogans like "Be realistic! Do the impossible!" or "Imagination to power!" would have been possible under conditions of material insecurity? Or by the social prospects opened as a result of technical development? If people did not have the freedom to make *choices* for a social pathway to a future guided by desire rather than need—a choice that was opened for that period precisely by a high degree of technical development—would Blanchot's plea for the "Great Refusal" have really been possible in the form that it acquired in 1968? Frankly, I think not—and the relentless effort by the establishment (including many environmentalists) to foster the myth that a "naturally induced scarcity" is upon us has done more to undermine the sense of hope of social liberation than the current interest and unemployment rates.

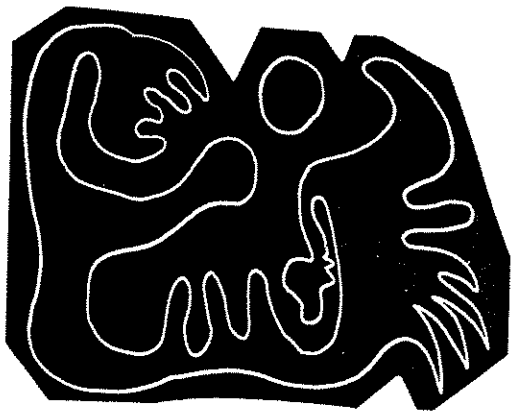
Yet it is ironical that my views, even in the sixties, were not committed to the notion of technical development as a precondition for freedom. Neither Kardas nor Yeobright take any cognizance of my statement at the opening of *Post-Scarcity Anarchism* that I have no way of validating whether historically we necessarily had to follow the so-called "Marxist" course of social development. Thus: "Whether this long and torturous development could have followed a *different*, more *benign* course is now irrelevant. The development is largely behind us. *Perhaps* like the mythic apple, which once bitten, had to be consumed completely, hierarchical society had to complete its own bloody journey. *Be that as it may*, our position is that historical drama differs fundamentally from that of anyone in the past." (p. 10, emphasis added) Given these clearly qualifying remarks, it should be patently clear that in a work oriented toward the uniqueness of the period in which it was written, even *Post-Scarcity Anarchy* was not committed to technocratic and economic interpretations of history. I find it interesting that while Yeobright tries very hard in my discussion of the decline of the Athenian *polis* to give my views an overly economic emphasis in my book *The Limits of the City* (Thucydides, by the way, is not the best source for a psychological interpretation of the *polis*' decline—a view which Yeobright seems to favor), he ignores the religious origins that underpin my explanation of the city's development. Even more strikingly, he takes no note of the alternative, more humane directions I adduce in my discussion of early capitalist development, notably in Switzerland,

where, as I point out, "the transformation from the guild workshop to the factory was so organic that Swiss communities, nearly to the present day, could be cited as models of civic balance, stability, and the integration of craft skills with mass production." (p. 53) This "organic" development of capitalism itself, at least in one area of the world, is sharply contrasted with its "savage" course in England. (p. 54)

These citations, it seems to me, are a cut above Bakunin's delicious formulation that the "State is an evil but a historically necessary evil, as necessary in the past as its complete extinction will be necessary sooner or later, just as necessary as primitive bestiality and theological divinations were necessary in the past." (C.P. Maximoff; *The Political Philosophy of Bakunin*, p. 145) I will not belabor the fact that Kropotkin not only accepted this formulation but often seems to have confused the state with society in *Mutual Aid*. I adduce these formulations from the "founders" of anarchism because I wish to stress how unclear issues like the State, technical "preconditions for freedom," and "historical necessity" were until very recent times. That terms like "primitive bestiality" (Bakunin) or "scientific anarchism" (Maximoff), to cite only a few dubious phrases, could have found their way into anarchist literature simply reflects the fact that anarchism itself is a social product, not an ethical Vatican that presides over the totality of history in a morally ahistorical manner. *Post-Scarcity Anarchism* was published to write off the problems, the cross-currents, and often simplistic moral judgments that entered into the anarchist theoretical corpus, not to "Marxify" anarchism, which in any case was riddled by very naive Marxian notions long before any of us saw the light of day. What is important about the book is not whether it was influenced by Marx, but rather that it declared this influence is no longer an issue—and that alternatives might have existed to our historical development (and indeed in "Toward a Liberatory Technology" did exist in future developments) even if Marxism ceased to be an issue worthy of theoretical discourse. Given this stance, the book in effect argued that Bakunin and Kropotkin could be read on their own terms quite aside from the fact that they held that the State was "historically necessary"—be it evil or virtuous—and that their criticisms of Marx's social theories were valid irrespective of what they borrowed or assimilated from Marx's historical perspective. Moreover, *Post-Scarcity Anarchism* tried to show that even if one accepts history in a Marxian sense, Marxism has become reactionary because it persists in

assigning a function ("evil" or "virtuous") to domination and hierarchy in a presumably emancipatory society.

What seems to trouble Yeobright and Kardas is that I see history as a process that lends itself to theoretical coherence and meaning—in their view that I "straitjacket" history into a theoretical framework. Frankly, I regard their interpretation of social development as an Anglo-American philosophical prejudice, a grossly empirical bias, no different I suspect in their eyes than my "Germanic" or neo-Hegelian prejudice that regards philosophical speculation as crucial in radical theory. Yeobright has personally told me that he regards Bertrand Russell's *History of Philosophy* as a masterpiece. Unfortunately, I do not regard this work very highly however much I hold many phases of Russell's life in high esteem. I doubt if we could ever have a meeting of the minds about the role of philosophy, or, perhaps even theory, in discussions about history. So far as anarchism is concerned, I personally prefer to avoid disputes around philosophy and history completely. Volumes of polemics would be required to adequately state the issues involved, much less resolve them. In addition, I feel somewhat iconoclastic about radical social theories generally. It means very little to me whether self-professed "anarchists" accuse me of all kinds of "deviations" from their own version of Bakuninist or Kropotkinist verities. I naively thought that the word "anarchist" irrevocably demarcated a revolutionary from a reformist approach (see *Toward an Ecological Society*, p. 224), but after seeing circled "A's" painted almost mindlessly all over the place from Zurich (where "anarchistic youth have simply evaporated in a period of little more than two years) to some American cities (where the symbol is becoming a merchandisable item), I must confess to a great deal of doubt about my earlier certainty. I regard myself as an anarchist for heuristic, philosophical, and traditional reasons (the latter, with due regard to the context of the great struggles and high hopes anarchist movements raised in contrast to the miserable history of the socialist movement they opposed). But I don't revere any nomenclature that becomes a substitute for a coherent theory and a revolutionary practice. My alienation from "anarchists" who regard the human brain as a digestive organ for churning food into spray-can paint is complete. For my part, I hold to a theory of anarcho-communalism as well as anarcho-communism that may very well involve voting on the municipal level in the spirit of the Parisian sections of 1793 and the New England town meetings. This view should be no secret to anyone who has read my writings; I advanced it in the last issue of *Anar-*



chos as early as 1971, not to speak of later works on libertarian municipalism.

What is most germane—all complaints and criticisms on detail aside—is that I am now firmly convinced we could have followed a quite different, now unforeseeable, evolutionary pathway in history. This issue arose in the early 1950s, when I was still a libertarian socialist and acolyte of Josef Weber of the *Contemporary Issues* group. Weber, whose Marxism was a deeply ingrained part of his outlook, was to write: "In history, it is exclusively a matter of what has actually happened, not of what might have occurred under different circumstances and conditions." (*Contemporary Issues*, Winter, 1950, p. 3) This formulation was polemically directed against my challenge that the course of history need not have followed the direction it did—but in 1950, dear friends, Franz Boas was the most luminescent light on the anthropological horizon, Charles Beard was the American cardinal of historiography, "feminism" could be resolved into the demand for "equal pay for equal work," Robert Moses had not yet made community a crucial issue in New York, and the New Left had yet to become a glint in the eyes of the parents of the Red diaper babies of Berkeley. Had my lack of Marxian orthodoxy in

historiography and historical alternative not lingered in my mind for thirty years and more, I doubt if I could have written "Toward a Liberatory Technology" (for all its faults), nor could I have dissociated the notion of "post-scarcity" from mere material affluence by qualifying my concept of "abundance" and "scarcity" with ideals borrowed from an emancipatory life world, culture, and sensibility. These views have merely matured since the sixties, not changed in any significant sense. Indeed, they have matured since the 1950s, when I was still challenging Weber with alternatives to the history of our species. I have explained in *The Ecology of Freedom* what "scarcity" means in my critique of the bourgeois notion of a "stingy nature" and the "fetishisation of needs." Those friends who care to explore my views on such issues would do well to consult the book and retain a modicum of sensitivity to its nuances.

This much is clear to me as a result of the development of my own ecological sensibility: Somewhere along the way, we had to separate ourselves as evolving beings from nature—from a "oneness" with nature—that would differentiate us increasingly in the direction of rationality, individuality, and a subjective, indeed, institutional universal humanity. For possibly millions of years, this separation evolved in the form of *differentiation* through a growing sense of social solidarity, *not* primarily (if at all) through domination. I associate this differentiation with changes effected by the mother-child dependency relationship (particularly as a result of prolonged infantile dependency), the complementarity of age and sex groups, and the commitment of the community to the irreducible minimum in material life.

What form of rationality, individuality, and sense of a universal humanity this evolutionary direction would have taken I do not know. Certainly, in my view, alternative social pathways based on differentiation would have been matricentric in character, based on the primacy traits such as nurture, reproduction, love, support, and mutuality rather than the primacy of obedience, production, hatred, rivalry, and egotism. Ultimately, one would hope, the autonomous individual could have merged within a matrix distinguished by group support and imbued with a sensibility that valued a holistic unity of diversity rather than a hierarchical arrangement of difference and otherness. I would prefer to call such an evolutionary pathway an ecological rather than a matricentric one, but I am deeply cognizant of the crucial role one half of humanity—its women—has played as the guardians of these ecological values

in the early socialization of the young. Birth itself and woman's role in taking over the custody of the infant is the redeeming hope that such values will persist as a "principle of hope," to use Ernst Bloch's terms, until they can become embodied in the civil society hitherto commandeered by the male.

In *The Ecology of Freedom*, I have addressed myself to the technics and technical imagination, to the notions of science and reason, and to the institutional developments that seem consistent with these notions of an ecological society. That it once yielded richly benign forms ages ago is the testimony prehistory and the vestigial remains of certain preliterate cultures, indeed, even portions of history. Tragically, in my view, this ecological evolution through differentiation was supplanted by evolution through domination, a "male" achievement, which in fact served to sharpen rationality, individuality, and create the ideal of a universal humanity but in warped and ultimately regressive forms. The medium of this male "civilization" was strife, not elaboration. At various turning points in history, periods did emerge (one thinks of the early Neolithic, the disintegration of the ancient world, and various times in the medieval world) when revolutionary change could have initiated a process of human and ecological reintegration. But this much is painfully clear: once capitalism permeated all of life with economics and the market nexus, particularly after the discovery of the New World, the interlinkages created by the commodity had to be unravelled. Owing to the fact that these interlinkages found their ideological explanation in a uniquely bourgeois "sense of scarcity" based on the myth of a "stingy nature," this unravelling in my view will have to take the form of post-scarcity whose very essence is that humanity will be in a position to choose without any social constraints what it means by technical development and need. Indeed, need, technics, interest, work, the metabolism of humanity with nature and with itself will have to be radically altered. We will be obliged to recover community on a new level of development without trying to return to an archaic past with its parochial, mythopoeic, and kinship-laden traits. The transcendence of domination by differentiation will have to include the gains made under the dark sign of domination—which is not to say that these gains, such as they are and given the form they have assumed, presuppose domination. It is in this sense that domination has reached its "historic limits," not in the sense that it has completed some "historically necessary" function (Bakunin) or desideratum (Marx).

These views form a very important aspect of my latest book, *The Ecology of Freedom*, and are elaborated in that work. The meaning that should be imparted to post-scarcity, indeed, to the dialectic of scarcity and need, is filled out in philosophical and historical terms. To understand what I have to say requires a thorough reading of the work with a respect for nuance and a willingness to enter into the content of the book, not to snip out phrases with a view toward "putting me in my place." I can easily understand that there will be many differences of opinion on my interpretation of the libertarian tradition and the specific views of the "founders" of nineteenth-century anarchist ideology.

But it would be rather silly to call me a "Marxist"—quite aside from the fact that I would acknowledge it if I were one. The people who Karl Marx would have regarded as acolytes in the later years of his life are gone. Even the word "neo-Marxism" has ceased to be fashionable. No body of theorists has more powerfully revealed the fatal flaws of Marx's variety of theories than the brilliant thinkers of the Frankfurt School—especially Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, and Walter Benjamin. They have been abetted in their critical dissection of Marxist ideology by men, now dead, who still called themselves Marxists, notably Ernst Bloch, and by a wide-ranging body of theorists from the "socialistic" Karl Polanyi to the expressly bourgeois sociologist Max Weber. I have explained in a recent article in *Telos* (Summer, 1982) on Jurgen Habermas that the Frankfurt School represented a transitional movement away from Marx's theoretical corpus—not a "dead end" as its critics would have us believe—that finally reached a cross-road by the late 1950s. Either it would have to move toward the radical social ecology elucidated in *Toward an Ecological Society* and *The Ecology of Freedom* or it would be entombed in the vacuous sociology of Jurgen Habermas and his "universal pragmatics."

What troubles me greatly is that there are so few anarchist theorists who recognize this highly dramatic confrontation in contemporary social theory today and are willing or able to participate in it. Certainly as a movement and a serious praxis American anarchists are doing very little these days. Admirable endeavors are being made in Montreal by the Anarchos Institute to establish a stimulating level of theoretical and cultural intercourse—but beyond that in North America the libertarian world seems rather dessicated. How rewarding it would be to reconstruct a libertarian theoretical corpus that could confront the present and

coming century with the enlarged perspectives opened by the Frankfurt School rather than churlishly return to the previous century and fade among the ghosts of a long-lost world of anarchists and Marxists alike.

Marxism bears the shackles of a name—Karl Marx—whose theory has become the official ideology of nearly all the totalitarian countries in Europe and Asia. Anarchism is larger in scope. It need not be sacrificed to anyone's name and it has the capacity to become a *social* movement (not merely an ideology or group of ideologists) that speaks to different times in different ways. It can become ever-fecund, ever-new, and ever-creative if only the anarchists themselves will permit it to grow. I believe that such growth presupposes a recognition of significant differences that separate us, the agreement to disagree and organize separately—although in cordial co-existence and relationships—with separate publications and activities. I believe, furthermore, that we have to draw richly from the wealth of *all* ideas—including Marx's—insofar as the result is holistic, coherent, and liberatarian. If not, anarchism, will become parochial, perhaps a "ghost" as Adorno called it, and try to revive a past that is as remote from our times ideologically as Jacobinism. In which case, anarchists who elect to become the vestal virgins of the sacred flame will be living testimony to William Morris' searing verdict (all limitations of gender aside):

Men fight and lose the battle, and the thing they fought for comes about in spite of their defeat, and when it comes turns out not to be what they meant, and other men have to fight for what they meant under another name.

August 11, 1982

P.S. I am mindful that I have not responded fully to a number of criticisms that Yeobright and Kardas have raised, but I have respected a request by one of *Black Rose's* editors to be as brief as possible. My reply to many of these criticisms, in any case, is easily found in my latest book, *The Ecology of Freedom*, and I hope readers of this magazine will refer to the work.

## HANGING CRADLES

The babies  
of the migrant workers  
lie in cradles  
cut from burlap sacks,  
hung from  
branches spread along  
the field's edge.  
They are out of  
the sun's reach, which is  
searching for them  
like a one-eyed gringo,  
who rises only for  
the taste of tequila  
and the smell  
of young flesh.

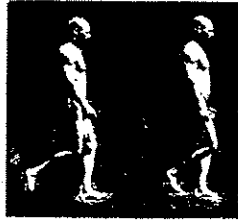
Forty rows away  
from their young,  
generations of baked people  
pull white balls  
from green cups. Young  
mothers begin a song  
short enough to finish  
before the hot air  
steals their breath.  
And a boy  
with his father's face  
guides a sagging burro  
along the line  
of tree cradles,  
waving away low-flying crows.  
The babies  
of the migrant workers  
lie still  
and listen  
to the song of work—  
the lyrics softly  
push their cradles  
once, and then again.

Ted Thomas, Jr.  
1.24.82



## Walking into Anarchy?

Gary Campanella



The idea to walk from Mexico to Canada really just came from boredom. Jeff was flipping through old National Geographics in the college library and he found an article entitled "Mexico to Canada on the Pacific Crest Trail" (June 1971). I remember we all looked at it and said "yeah, we gotta do that" and then went back to studying—just tossing the idea out the window like Jack did with his magic bean seeds. Now what makes this so significant (what allowed the seeds to grow) is that we continued to talk about the walk whenever we were bored,—it was like our community daydream,—and now, three and a half years later, nothing, not liberal arts degrees, not good jobs, not even girlfriends has stopped our boredom with everyday life from turning the daydream into reality.

And to be honest, the walk is still more than just rooted in that boredom for us. I mean, everyone asks us why we want to make such a walk (and they usually got that "the 60's are over" cynicism in their eyes), and none of us has come up with a really good answer. It's like we woke up one morning and the seeds had become a beanstalk as big as our backyards. So what else is there to do but climb it?

Of course, the walk is no longer just an idea for us (we've made that transition from talking about it to doing things about it). As a result, people, especially relatives and friends, expect and deserve a better reason than "we're bored." So at the risk of sounding like a social scientist, I'll start my explanation by defining this boredom, the boredom that drove us to the Crest, as our alienation. No I don't mean the kind of alienation that people, let's say, in the inner city feel,—the realization that the American Dream is closed to them. Because the American Dream is wide open for all three of us. We're all middle class and educated at a fine liberal arts college. The corporate world is looking for us. The alienation we feel from the American Dream is spiritual, it's motivational. Speaking very personally (I'm currently assistant sales manager for a stock market advisory service), the corporate world has offered me no satisfaction and it literally bores me to death. Thus, I have no reason for dedicating myself to it, and I'm alienated from people who do.

The Crest carries a very definite anti-American Dream, almost Beat Generation, feeling for all three of us. I mean, we're not trying to make this a professional walk. We're not trying to "conquer" the Crest. We're very informal about setting an exact route (we're looking for exciting detours from the Park Service route) and we're de-hydrating our own food. We're very low budget and have no choice, but still don't mind keeping it that way. Our superstition is that bad things happen with too much planning and the best things happen spontaneously. Which isn't to say we're underestimating the degree of preparedness we need for the walk, it's just that, in the end, we'll do what we can and want on the walk. At the same time we're, what I call, "anti-American macho" about the walk, we don't really run a risk of being "purists" about the walk. That is, our personalities aren't that serious. We all like junk food and are not "above" an occasional, when affordable, steak dinner, or taking shelter on cold rainy night, or getting rip-roaring drunk whenever the mood is right.

We've talked about this alot, and we closely share these "anti-American macho" and "anti-purist hiker" attitudes. I almost think of us as pioneers, leaving them all behind. In any case, we realize that because of this we'll have to be relying on each other and on ourselves every step of the way (as it's all we'll really have left to rely on). This is fine. As I said, we are not walking to conquer the Crest, and we are not walking to prove something, anything, to anybody. If we're pioneers, then our frontier is the spirit, not the land and not the ego. We are all very much walking to enjoy the walk and all three of us speak of the walk as a "cleaning out" experience—a kind of Native American vision quest. This is really our driving force, and the reason why we'll all finish the walk. You see, we're all aware of our bonds—the fact we all were dissatisfied New Englanders who left home at 18 years old for the Midwest and found that atmosphere an even bigger nightmare. And so now we have all ended up bringing our search for satisfaction to the Pacific Crest, bringing us coast to coast, and to the limit. We think this physical situation alone should bring all the determination and commitment we'll need to hold us together even beyond the Crest. Further, the fact that we've all chosen *this* quest,—especially after our time in the Midwest college and the fact that most people see the walk as either useless or just youthful fancy,—gives us yet another kind of glue. This one's like a rebellious pride,—cause we think the whole situation's about as anti-American

Dream as you can get,—and it shows in our humor, which is sarcastic and mocking. We think the walk will ease our bitterness and show us a way of life that's not so boring.

Now these are all fairly general (however important) reasons for walking the Crest. These are the ties that bind the three of us. But as every hiker knows, while we all pitch camp together, during the journey we all walk alone. Thus, we all have our very personal reasons for walking the Crest. If we call the walk a vision quest, we can say that each of us seeks a different vision. Now I really don't want to presume the depth of the visions Jeff and Mick are seeking for, truly, I don't really know. I can guess that Jeff is seeking out more self-reliant lifestyles. He's also seeking out the myth of the mountain man. I think he feels that pretty close. Mick, in some ways, is more spiritual. More than anyone I've yet known, he feels the call of the wild. He has told me so. He is answering that call with the Crest.

If you ask me more about them, I can't go very far, not right now anyway. Maybe they can't either. But if you ask me what vision I am seeking, I can tell you in no uncertain terms because the choices I face are so clearcut. The Crest for me is spiritual life or death. It is selling out or not selling out. You see, while the American Dream does not seem to offer me anything but ulcers and boredom, it still tempts me. The Catholic and middle class ideas of authority that I was raised with are only slowly being exorcised.—And I often have nightmares of how Jack Kerouac turned reactionary before he died and I can sometimes taste how easy it is to be like T.S. Eliot's Hollow Men. It's all like the temptation to fall asleep when you're driving. Right now I'm on the threshold of breaking through all this. It's just that I don't quite know who I am. My revolution is in my mind and in my heart, but the two are not quite together. For instance, I work with Black Rose because I believe anarchist principles, but then I find myself caught in this or that silent acceptance of some middle class or Catholic authority and I can't really say "I am an anarchist," because I don't really feel it.

I know it's just that old American fear of the unknown that's stopping me, and the Crest, I know will let me beat that fear.—The reason is because in order to try the Crest I'll have to face up to all my fears. The Crest'll be like spending a night in the cemetery to beat a fear of the dark, or standing "no hands" on a ladder to beat a fear of heights. In order just to try the Crest I will literally have to give up every facet of my American

Dream—my job, my apartment, most of my possessions and I suspect even my girlfriend. And once I have done this, once I have taken that first step northward from the Mexican border, I have a feeling there'll be no stopping me. My silent acceptance of all phoney authority will disappear, and I will be free to really be as I really am.

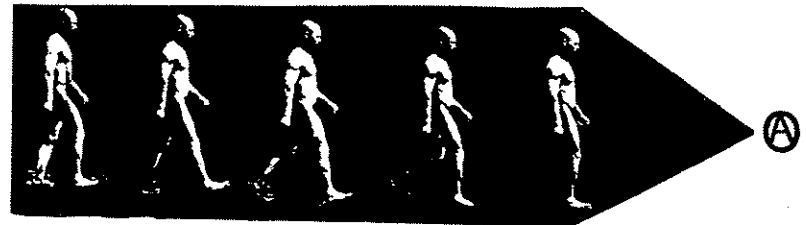
If I fail the Crest (and failing will be failing myself and not necessarily have everything to do with whether or not I finish), I don't know what will happen.

I have recently read the amazing account that Nunez Cabeza de Vaca gave of his walk, naked after a shipwreck, from Florida to Mexico City, between 1528-1536. His account, which in many ways is ahead of our time, is in the form of a letter to his Queen of Spain, who we can picture sitting in the portable wisdom of her time. Nunez is trying to explain to her what he has learned:

Your majesty, such were the senses in which I found myself treating all human beings alike. I screw up my courage to confess it. Perhaps it is the secret thing which life has in itself to become—a long, long march on the road, meeting people, thrown into relations with them, having to meet demands often terrible and without the aid of mysterious power impossible: demands of healing and understanding, and constantly the exorcism of fear.

(pp. 29-30)

POSTSCRIPT: As I've indicated, our budget is low for the walk—and as we're beginning to find out, the costs can easily become enormous. If any Black Rose readers, particularly those living on the west coast (we're still on the east coast), think they can help us in some small, but vital, details—such as helping us plan sites for placing food and water caches, it will save us dollars and time in traveling etc. that we just don't have and, as a result, you will swim in our gratitude. Please write Black Rose and let us know.



## Kenneth Rexroth 1906 - 1982

At the beginning of June, Kenneth Rexroth, poet, painter, writer, critic, died in California. He had been a committed and knowledgeable anarchist from his youth despite occasional leanings toward the Catholic Church and one abortive attempt to join the Communist Party during the Great Depression. (The CP, always with a sensitive nose in matters of authority, rejected Rexroth because, in its opinion, he was not a good follower, tending too much towards anarchism.)

Rexroth leaves a significant and varied body of work, poems, translations, essays, an autobiographical novel—notable not only for its clarity, beauty, and intelligence, but also for its vital balance of the personal and the political. Among other things, it documents vividly a sizeable and defiant radical America that sadly has now disappeared almost completely from sight.

Art outlasts the specific issues of its day and later generations often adapt it willfully to their own urgencies, but Rexroth's work will continue to show us that politics no less than love, war, or nature stimulates the imagination that creates art.

—rd

Life with us goes on just the same. Born and raised in what they used to call "The Radical Movement" I always look back with amused pride on those old timers who didn't smoke or drink and lived long and troubled lives absolutely devoted to one unmarried spouse—to keep themselves fit and ready for the barricades. The World, The Flesh, and The Devil are far subtler personages than those innocent Jewish mechanics and Italian peasants thought, but they still go about in the night as a roaring lion seeking whom they may devour. It behoves the artist to recognize and avoid them, especially when they wave red, or black, flags, as well as roar. Because art is a weapon. After millions of well-aimed blows, someday perhaps it will break the stone heart of the mindless cacodemon called Things As They Are. Everything else has failed.

KENNETH REXROTH

Everybody has a lot of fakery in his make-up. When it is personal it is all right. A man can be forgiven for being a snarf, a vegetarian, or a frequenter of astrologists. He cannot be forgiven for being a parson or a social worker or a professor. No truck with the Social Lie. Why not? Not because it makes you a partner in mass murder, which it does, but because it reduces all action to frivolity.

Once moral authority is delegated all action becomes meaningless. The institutionalization of creativity which is almost all-prevailing today is met with reluctance, secret recalcitrance, *tedium vitae*, however gaudy the rewards, or even however noble the ends. Reluctant engineers can build Dnieprestroy, reluctant intellectuals can implement Mr. Dulles' lethal priggery in Taiwan, Spain, or Santo Domingo. You cannot write a reluctant poem or paint a reluctant picture. Those who pretend to are, on the face of it, institutionalized imbeciles.



### WHEN WE WITH SAPPHO

"... about the cool water  
the wind sounds through sprays  
of apple, and from the quivering leaves  
slumber pours down ..."

See. The sun has fallen away.  
Now there are amber  
Long lights on the shattered  
Boles of the ancient apple trees.  
Our bodies move to each other  
As bodies move in sleep;  
At once filled and exhausted,  
As the summer moves to autumn,  
As we, with Sappho, move towards death.  
My eyelids sink toward sleep in the hot  
Autumn of your uncoiled hair.  
Your body moves in my arms  
On the verge of sleep;  
And it is as though I held  
In my arms the bird filled  
Evening sky of summer.

## FISH PEDDLER AND COBBLER

Always for thirty years now  
I am in the mountains in  
August. For thirty Augusts  
Your ghosts have stood up over  
The mountains. That was nineteen  
Twenty seven. Now it is  
Nineteen fifty seven. Once  
More after thirty years I  
Am back in the mountains of  
Youth, back in the Gros Ventres,  
The broad park-like valleys and  
The tremendous cubical  
Peaks of the Rockies. I learned  
To shave hereabouts, working  
As cookee and night wrangler.  
Nineteen twenty two, the years  
Of revolutionary  
Hope that came to an end as  
The iron fist began to close.  
No one electrocuted me.  
Nothing happened. Time passed.  
Something invisible was gone.  
We thought then that we were the men  
Of the years of the great change,  
That we were the forerunners  
Of the normal life of mankind.  
We thought that soon all things would  
Be changed, not just economic  
And social relationships, but  
Painting, poetry, music, dance,  
Architecture, even the food  
We ate and the clothes we wore  
Would be ennobled. It will take  
Longer than we expected.  
These mountains are unchanged since  
I was a boy wandering  
Over the West, picking up  
Odd jobs. If anything they are  
Wildier. A moose cow blunders  
Into camp. Beavers slap their tails  
On their sedge pond as we fish  
From on top of their lodge in the  
Twilight. The horses feed on bright grass  
In meadows full of purple gentian,  
And stumble through silver dew  
In the full moonlight.  
The fish taste of meadow water.  
In the morning on far grass ridges  
Above the red rim rock wild sheep  
Bound like rubber balls over the  
Horizon as the noise of camp

Begins. I catch and saddle  
Mary's little golden horse,  
And pack the first Decker saddles  
I've seen in thirty years. Even  
The horse bells have a different sound  
From the ones in California.  
Canada jays fight over  
The last scraps of our pancakes.  
On the long sandy pass we ride  
Through fields of lavender primrose  
While lightning explodes around us.  
For lunch Mary catches a two pound  
Crayling in the whispering river.  
No fourteen thousand foot peaks  
Are named Sacco and Vanzetti.  
Not yet. The clothes I wear  
Are as unchanged as the Decker  
Saddles on the pack horses.  
America grows rich on the threat of death.  
Nobody bothers anarchists anymore.  
Coming back we lay over  
In Ogden for ten hours.  
The courthouse square was full  
Of miners and lumberjacks and  
Harvest hands and gandy dancers  
With broken hands and broken  
Faces sleeping off cheap wine drinks  
In the scorching heat, while tired  
Savage eyed whores paraded the street.

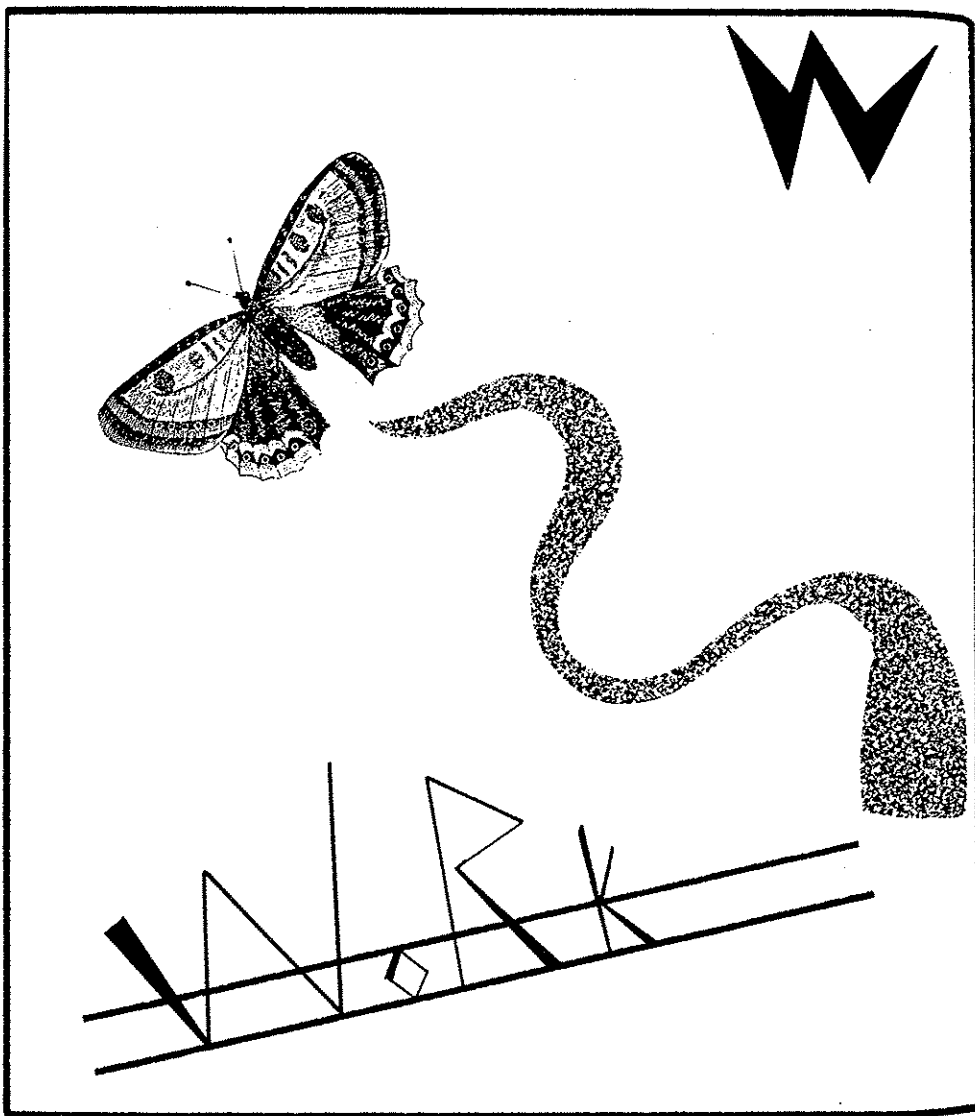
I had long discussions about that Revolution which then seemed so near and about Anarchism, Bolshevism, Syndicalism versus Socialism, Federalist Anarchism versus Syndicalism, Alexander Berkman versus Lenin and Trotsky, and Herman Corter versus all of them. It may seem academic now and very far away, but it was not then; it was life and death to us in those days.

Bertrand Russell had visited Russia prepared to accept Bolshevism, and had written, "The present holders of power, Lenin and Trotsky, are evil men, and there is no depth of cruelty, perfidy, and brutality from which they will shrink when they feel themselves threatened." These words, printed in red block letters, still survive in one of my notebooks for the year 1924.

All day long the bookshop was a hotbed of argument. I think that it was there, in discussions with Geraldine and others, that I straightened out my attitudes toward the pressing problems of the revolutionary movement. I don't think the straightening out was due to Geraldine's brains, I think it was due to her calm. Nothing was said that was decisive but the atmosphere was decisive. I look back on the period and place and discussions as a determinative moment. I remember standing there and arguing with Charlie Ashleigh, Jim Larkin's lawyer (whose name I've forgotten), Caleb Harrison, and Geraldine. Geraldine spoke little but to the point. We were discussing the Kropotkin letter.

I realize now the Kropotkin letter was a fake, but we were hotly debating it then in good faith. In a letter circulated by the Bolsheviks, Kropotkin had said, "This is not our revolution. We were unable to make a revolution. The Bolsheviks did. We should never take part with the bourgeoisie, let alone the Czarists, against them. We should cooperate with them in trade unions and mass organizations and defense and let them take care of their own politics." This is the definition of fellow traveling. I think it's highly unlikely Kropotkin ever wrote this letter. He was deliberately starved to death by the Bolsheviks in a little cottage in the country and he died about this time, and this was supposed to be his testament. It hit America along with Alexander Berkman's revelations, Trotsky's apology for terror, and news of the suppression of the Kronstadt rebellion, and the betrayal of Makhno by Trotsky.

I made, pretty deliberately, the decision that I would avoid the political issues. I had no use for the Socialist Party or any of its works. It was obvious that the IWW had reached the end of its tether; something had gone wrong with it. I decided that the thing to work with rather than the IWW was the ordinary trade-union movement, which, of course, we all despised. Lenin was mild in his criticism of lieutenants and agents of the bosses in the ranks of labor in comparison with us. But I was coming to the conclusion that my job was to find what the Bolsheviks called "the masses," and to avoid the factional fighting which surrounded any Bolshevik incursion into the labor movement. The most effective tactic seemed to be to bow before the storm and keep out of the way, to try to work on a mass level and avoid pie cards of any kind, to try to work with the rank and file, to constantly increase rank-and-file initiative and democratization, and to assist any measure that led to greater control on the part of the workers, but to keep quiet about my personal program and never get myself drawn into a factional position. By and large, I was able to stick to this decision.



## Anarchism and the Workplace Democratization Strategy

C. George Benello

*Paper given at the Anarchos Institute conference, "Intellectuals and the State," Montreal, June 5th & 6th, 1982*

If we consider anarchism in its relation to socialism, I see anarchism, by virtue of its concern with freedom and human relatedness, as focusing on issues of human organization, especially self-organization. Anarchism has perhaps been weak on the macro level, or at least divided: it has vacillated between theories of armed revolution and propaganda of the deed on the one hand, and on counter-institution building on the other. At certain times and places it has combined the two, as in the 1930's in Spain. I will not pause to argue whether the weakness in broad strategy derives from any inherent difficulty in organizing in a libertarian fashion on the larger level or is simply a product of lack of numbers and opportunity.

The focus on self-organization characteristic of anarchism is I believe theoretically important for several reasons:

1. It reflects the fact that a comprehensive theory of social change must 'build the future into the present' by developing within it the forms that are to characterize the new society. If these forms are to be self-organizing and democratic, they must develop along with the movement itself. Any theory that is exclusively focussed on classes and masses may be able to mobilize large numbers of people, but lacks per se the understanding of group and organization formation necessary to create the New Society. Thus it runs the danger of thermidorean relapses into new forms of authoritarianism which produces a class system within a statist bureaucracy.

2. It also reflects the fact that voluntaristic organization is in an important sense a higher form of organization, requiring forms of individual commitment, consciousness and group skills which traditional top-down organization overlooks. Just as it is easier to enlist assistance in a project requiring collective action by either threats or offers of reward—ie. appealing to extrinsic motivations of fear, security or gain, so

it is easier to build organizations based on these motivations than it is to involve people in the more complex intrinsic motivations implied by voluntaristic and cooperative action. As a system involving extrinsic rewards and threat systems becomes institutionalized, it develops its own ongoing stratification, hence making it appear as if the ruling class involved bore sole responsibility for the inequity. But this personalizing of the problem neglects the realities and difficulties involved in developing liberatory organization.

3. Self-organizing theory reflects the affirmative side of anarchist doctrine in which social forms are created which embody the values that are rhetorically affirmed. This is the most genuine type of praxis, I believe. There are obvious ethical dimensions involved in making theory accord with practise. More importantly, the need to create self-organizing voluntaristic organization, from the perspective of anarchist theory (certainly that of Landauer and Buber), can be seen to be both basic and universal. Unless the basic units of a society are self-organizing, the State, whether it is formally democratic or not, takes on the top-down character of whatever is at the base. Democracy must start with the nuclear units of a society.

Anarchism has not developed, in my view, any adequate theory that explains the existence of inherent constraints which exist prior to external forms of oppression, although the anarchist dictum that wherever there is oppression, somewhere down the line there is consent recognizes the existence of such constraints. These constraints derive from a number of sources; and there is a need to analyze them in detail (1). They fall under several categories.

1. The broadest and most philosophically derived constraint comes from the fact that contra the Freudo-Marxists, who speak of a return to "polymorphous pre-genital sexuality", and the creation of a genital rather than armored personality, the achievement of personal liberation can be seen as a process of struggle and self-mastery lasting though a life time, characterised by stages of development, and certainly related to if not necessary to the achievement of any broader social liberation. The Freudo-Marxists (in some contrast to Freud himself) tended to see liberation in Rousseauistic terms: "man is born free, but everywhere he is in chains." The work of Kohlberg and others suggests that psychosocial development proceeds in stages starting with an infantile egoism and moving outward and toward a capacity for ever-increasing identification

with larger goals and spheres of value. It is also true that a culture as a whole can represent a particular stage of psychosocial development—witness the American culture of individualism—and this can either further facilitate or hinder psychosocial development to a stage where the level of cooperation needed to achieve successful voluntaristic organization is made possible (2).

2. Related to the above is the human tendency to organize with a minimum of effort, in the interest of short-term task achievement, rather than going through the more difficult process of involving people in the ongoing self-organizing process. Top down organization is always quicker and easier to create, as suggested earlier. This in turn institutionalizes organizational forms calculated to get ahead with the job at the expense of developing organizational forms capable of taking into account the varied needs of all the members. Where voluntaristic and cooperative organization is the cultural norm, it undoubtedly is not hard to propagate. Where, as in this country, it runs counter to the norm, it is all the more difficult. But culture aside, a look at two-person paradigms should indicate that it is always true that in the short term, extrinsic motivation is always easier to rely on than intrinsic involvement. Where individualism is the rule, moreover, the founding person or group will naturally tend to retain ownership of the organization, and find ways to enlist others who are needed with a minimal giving out of organizational benefits. Organizationally, capitalism can be seen as the playing out of this principle.

3. There are also the constraints deriving from a machine technology—again related to the above—which too easily shape (and warp) the social forms into a machine-like mirror image, with people subordinated to machines. The assembly line is the ruling example. Faced with the capacity for mass production, and given the prior existence of organizational ownership by the initial founding group, the tendency is to allow the machines to dictate the terms of work, making workers into machine tenders, since again in the short term, this appears to promise the greatest productivity and hence rewards. A machine technology reinforces tendencies already there and mystifies the resulting labor forms by making it appear that they derive from the pure principles of efficiency as such, or from the very nature of the production technology. Recently, a literature has developed which explores and demystifies this phenomenon (3).

4. Finally, there are constraints deriving from the laws of scale, and cause large organizations to develop status, monetary rewards, and a clustering of power at the top all of which constitute extrinsic rewards. These are needed as substitution for the fact that intrinsic rewards occur most naturally in small groups where the contribution of individual members makes a difference (4). Thus large organizations are per se more difficult to organize democratically, requiring a micro structure of group formations. In Yugoslavia, the experience has been that worker councils alone are insufficient to establish a participative process, since workers in large plants feel out of touch with their representatives on the council. Hence a system of work units has been established made up of groups of at most 200 workers. These groups function usually with a large degree of autonomy, often operating like independent subcontractors within the plant. The Mondragon system of worker cooperatives in northern Spain develops several new production cooperatives a year, none of them larger than 400 workers; it has found that beyond that size, the plants do not function as effectively.

For the reasons indicated above, I understand anarchism as requiring a theory of liberatory organization combining the individual and the social, the personal and the political. Such a theory must be based on a recognition of the natural constraints that come in the way of developing this kind of organization and must have an understanding of the techniques needed to deal with them. Since large formal task-oriented organizations constitute both the most important and most difficult field for the development of liberatory organization and the overcoming of these constraints, I believe that anarchist practise requires an understanding of the techniques and theory needed to achieve this. It is for this reason that I see the field of self-management and self-organizing as being of primary importance. What the four principles briefly sketched out above all point to is the need to establish organizations in every sector which operate on intrinsic motivations, able to involve members because they are group-based and semi-autonomous, whether or not they form part of some larger organization. Issues of scale as well as organizational structure are thus of fundamental importance to anarchistic theory.

Seen from another perspective, the tendency to reify social forms can be understood as a problem independent of though related to the issue of human oppression. Social construction is inevitably a leap in the dark and an art form as well as a science which must be developed even

in the absence of oppression. And human oppression can itself be understood as an encrustation from the past deriving significantly from past failures to create liberatory social forms and liberated human beings. To use the language of theology, original sin derives not from some fatal flaw in human nature but from the failure to master inherent psychological, ecological and organizational challenges which result in reified social forms that oppress. Liberatory organization requires both skills and a higher level of consciousness and psychosocial development than does conventional organization. To create liberatory organization, it is indeed necessary to confront the weight of accepted tradition, reflected in oppressive and reified social forms. But this does not justify the revolutionist ideology that focusses exclusively on destroying the old, relying on revolutionary spontaneity to create the new forms that will embody the Good Society.

An understanding of this would ensure that anarchism does not enter into the confusions with nihilist practises that at times has been the case; destroying the state by killing off its leaders is an example of such practise. Struggle to create liberated spaces where liberatory organizations can be developed represents a very different sort of strategy, based on the recognition that oppression is not simply a product of evil people, but more basically is a product of entropic tendencies which make it easier to construct societies based on reward and punishment than on intrinsic motivation. This is particularly true today, where the vast investment in technology results in rationalized forms of oppression which are perceived as necessary if we are to benefit from the fruits of technological advance. In short, the industrial-technical system does not derive its force from the ruling elites that govern it, but from a very general belief in the necessity of the social forms that have almost everywhere been attendant on industrialization. As suggested, there are indeed strong forces that will tend to shape the social forms. But these should be resisted. Comparative anthropology teaches us that technologically sparse societies have a much better chance of developing in a more balanced and hence more liberatory fashion.

This allows us to understand theories of progress in a fashion different from the prevailing mode. If real progress is to come about, it must balance whatever potential derives from the extended mastery of technology with the enhanced capacity to create social forms which avoid the increased dangers of reification and a devolution to machine forms

of organization. Technological progress of itself leads to the development of technological and organizational monstrosities, and these agencies act so as to enslave human beings to their ends, preventing human growth and liberation. Each generation must thus reappropriate the social forms that it has inherited; all progress is abstract and unreal unless it is intimately related to the capacity to act back on and modify inherited social forms so as to fit them to the needs of those who had no hand in their creation (5). This responsiveness can only be guaranteed through extensive participation. Thus 'primitive' societies may well be socially more advanced because they are more capable of comprehending and institutionalizing within their culture perspectives on life and nature than is our own culture with its one-sided preoccupation with technological advance.

The inherent possibility of social misconstruction exists within all social forms, but it is the dominant institutions within a given society that set the tone and provide the structural archetype for all the others. To change this archetype in the direction of greater liberation organizational alternatives must be created which are capable of fulfilling the original functions at least as effectively while at the same time addressing the key structural reasons why the archetype fails to encourage the development of the human potential. The general reasons why this is likely to happen have been briefly touched on. To understand the obstacles that are specific to the present—to advanced industrial society—it is necessary to understand the dominant institution within advanced industrial society: the corporation.

The corporation, as the embodiment of the major thrust of industrial society, is officially defined in the language of economic theory as motivated by the quest for profits. Marxism has analysed this in terms of the appropriation of surplus value created by labor, but this does not diverge from the basic model of motivation. Classical economic theory explains the quest for profits as a product of rational self-interest—Homo Economicus. Marxism, while drawing on class analysis, and dialectical materialism to explain the phenomenon, also focusses on economic determinants of behavior even if it sees them differently. It sees the production system as the basic determinant of the rest of the social system. It is possible to agree with this view, but to understand the forces that make for the primacy of the productive system in terms that differ from both classical economic theory and marxism.

To fully understand the dimensions of the problem, it is necessary to understand that the impetus toward industrialization and technological advance—the two are intimately related—derives not simply from greed, the lust after profits or appropriation of the surplus, but rather primarily reflects a fixation on the forms of power that technological advance has been capable of delivering. The machine multiplies human muscle power many times over; the computer and electronic technology multiply—both specific forms of mental power and communicational ability even more spectacularly. Human vision is carried into the very small, the very large, the very distant; time and space are mastered. There is thus an enormous magnification of human power, of the human senses, and of at least certain powers of the human mind.

Any historical explanation which focusses exclusively on economic forces neglects the extent to which the romance entailed by the vast increase of human power derived from technology dictates social forms, institutions, a relation to nature which can most easily contribute to this project. Today the current thrust is perhaps most clearly expressed in the widespread infatuation with the computer. But as with the development of freeways, where traffic always grows to a point where more are needed, computer technology increases the preoccupation with quantitative data and deflects from more thoughtful qualitative and global evaluation. Data multiplies to fill the processing capacity, and yet another technology has become functionally autonomous, an end in itself. Thus the reigning presuppositions of industrial technology are not questioned, and the explanation in terms of economic drives fails to illuminate their true character.

Any dominant fixation tends to become functionally autonomous and addictive, subordinating all other behaviors to its own imperatives. Conversely, in order to liberate from the fixation, it becomes necessary to address the forces which have caused the fixation in the first place, creating a reorientation and alternatives which bring things into better balance and destroy the addictive cycle. The corporate system draws on the infatuation with technological power to create profits; automobile advertising is a prime example. Today resource limitations and higher costs have turned attention elsewhere; it is likely that the computer may well replace the automobile as the vehicle for continued mass production in the magic of technology. Profits are of course a means to achieve corporate growth and hence more power. But the sense of power through



technology is widely shared by those who do not benefit from corporate profits; it is the larger motivation.

This analysis is consonant with the anarchist notion that wherever there is domination, there is also consent. The general acceptance of technological advance, and of the authoritarian social forms through which it is expressed are of one piece: domination is consented to because it brings with it the promise of extended power over nature, and this becomes a generally dominating social image. The tunnel vision which sees technological advance as the solution to all the problems of society is expressed, for example in a recent widely publicized book which envisions a "computopia" where computers will solve basic social problems. The book, *The Information Society* by a Japanese futurist, Yoneji Masuda, argues that computers can create a decentralized "Information Society" that can solve the problems of industrialization and create a computer utopia. This vision subordinates social forms to the imperatives of technology, and hence is not concerned to undertake the task of developing a liberatory social order, since it would run counter to the unlimited development of technology, putting restraints on that development which derive from intrinsic consideration. To ask whether certain technologies are suitable, or can enhance the growth of those who use them would limit "progress" in ways which the advocates of unrestrained technological advance would find far too constraining.

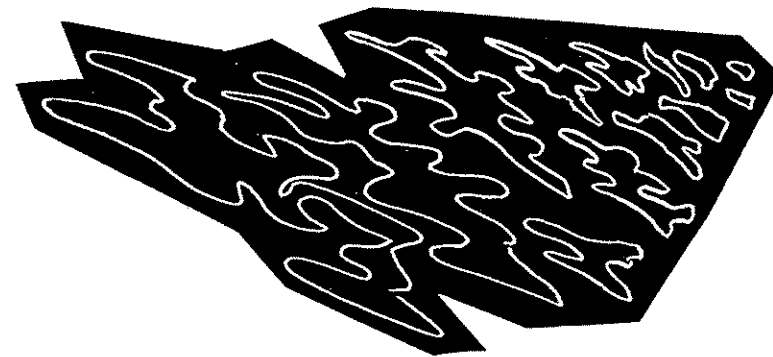
Thus the reigning infatuation with technology as power is related closely to social domination, as Murry Bookchin has pointed out (6). Domination comprehends systems which are at once social and technical. One understands this when one sees the remnants of great cultures such as the Egyptian or the Inca, which both produced massive monuments that were dedicated to the immortalization of their leaders. Lewis Mumford has noted the periodic appearance throughout human history of what he calls the 'invisible machine'—a machine made up of human parts—and has noted that as technology has magnified and extended the limits of human power over nature, the 'invisible machine' has become both more powerful and more omnipresent (7). With the rise of technology, the temptation to create autocratic organization has increased.

There are of course important counter-trends, toward appropriate technology, ecological awareness, decentralism, and human growth. These trends are all closely related to anarchist thought, and anarchism should legitimately be on the forefront in developing both the theory and

the praxis of these alternatives. For this to happen, anarchism must develop in several ways:

1. It must develop an understanding of the hold of technological power on the popular imagination, of how this distorts social forms and trends toward massification, an infatuation with technological means, and a failure to consider the relation of these forces to genuine human interests. (Paul Goodman was expert at raising these sorts of questions.)

2. It must seek to develop strategies which relate liberatory organizational forms to liberatory uses of the technology, since the two are interrelated by virtue of the fact that it is the addiction with technology that further warps organizational forms beyond what might be expected otherwise.



3. It must move beyond its current involvement with largely cultural and educational alternatives, and develop a capacity to deal with the larger functions of formal organizations—the functions at present resident largely within corporations—including mainly those functions which address technological power. Thus it should concern itself with democratic work organization especially in those new areas of communication and information technology which are most likely to become the carriers of the dominant technological thrust. Above all, it should be concerned to develop liberatory organizations in product and service areas which are close to the heart of the present technological thrust, demonstrating through this how it is possible to both create liberatory organizations and a liberatory technology; just as the present uses of technology are fitted to the organizational forms which embody them, so alternatives to them must equally embody both form and content.

Put in somewhat over-simplified fashion, if the only problem confronting us was social inequality resulting from abstract historical forces or from the single-minded quest for profits, then counterposing to this a struggle for an egalitarian worker's state might have some meaning. But if the deeper problem is learning how to combat the thrust toward ever greater technological power and organizational giantism, then only participative, decentralist solutions embodying a humanized technology subject to broader and more comprehensive social purposes will do. Much of socialism has swallowed the reigning mythology of industrialism and technology. But anarchism has inherent reasons for allying itself instead with the new ecological consciousness, and these reasons derive from an understanding of how the popular consciousness has been formed by the technological fix, and of how the extensive investment in technology leads to social domination as well.

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The culture of industrialism has inevitably made work into a machine-like activity, subordinating the majority as workers to the technological dreams of grandeur of those who possess the means and knowledge to master the machines. But as consumers, this majority shares in the dream by possession of the products that bring technological mastery; oppression in the workplace is countered by participation in the technological marketplace. Thus although a majority of the workforce is in-

involved in service and maintenance functions—in government, education, social services and the like—the dream is still there: the power and the glory belong to the instrumentalities of production since it is here that the magnification of human powers is experienced most directly. Note that is also experienced by those who *man* the state apparatus—and through identification by their underlings—through the extensive involvement of the state in weapons systems possessed of a power and destructive potential that are unique. Not only the nuclear weapons but the jets, the missiles, the radar and communications, the tanks and battleships, all form part of a vast technological apparatus dedicated to destruction, deriving its rationale from the existence of similar systems of warfare technology possessed by other States.

Nowhere is the addictive character of technology seen more clearly than in this setting up of systems of mutual destruction, to the detriment of living standard, security, and peaceful forms of human progress. The urge to power thus finds its most apt expression in the warfare state, which links state domination with the technology of warfare; Randolph Bourne's observation, "War is the health of the State" takes on a magnified meaning here, clarified by the understanding of how technology contributes to the natural tendencies of the State toward self-aggrandizement at the expense of its people and makes these tendencies infinitely more lethal. The private corporation and the warfare state: these are the loci of the contemporary disease, and the two are closely intertwined on the material level by the urge to profits and on the cultural level by a shared investment in power through technology.

We shall not dwell further on the problem of the warfare state; its centrality to anarchist thought is only underlined by the analysis presented here. As to the corporation, the analysis suggests that if significant change is to be wrought here, it should involve both the organization and its products. The need to change corporate organization is non-controversial from an anarchist point of view. The need to change the corporate products follows from the need to create a new technology, one that is subordinated to and serves human needs. As with certain South Pacific tribes, who only adopt western technology if it does not disturb their social patterns, an appropriate and humane technology would be judged—as Schumacher has pointed out—according to whether it enhances rather than replaces human productivity and imagination.

The argument so far is to the effect that the libertarian thrust of

anarchism as a theory of human organization should be aimed squarely at the workplace, and particularly at the factories, the R & D corporations, and in general at the technological elite who are responsible for the new electronics and information technology. The greater flexibility of this new technology does indeed make it susceptible to humanization and decentralization, although the evidence so far indicates that that is certainly not where it is headed. But it is this technology which increasingly is coming to symbolize the thrust of technological advance, and in the process is creating the driving cultural image. As an image, it is perhaps less constraining than the machine image of the earlier industrial period. But the question is still how to humanize this technology and how to raise questions regarding the relation of this technology to broader human goals that cannot be answered from within the context of its assumptions. These questions are as important as questions of democratic and liberatory structure, given the fact that for the technological elite, the new technology is perceived as per se an enhancement of human freedom.

There is an argument made in some self-management circles that it is important not to involve the worker cooperative movement in attempts to instill social values. Worker cooperatives should be free to produce whatever they want—particularly given their general marginality and the difficulty they experience in obtaining financing, skilled workers and management, and adequate markets. For those who have experienced the difficulty of developing successful examples of self-management, this argument is cogent. And yet, it is the magic of technological advance which most subtly holds the imagination not only of the producers, but most especially of the consumers of technology. From the side of the ecology movement, of those who espouse an appropriate technology which is neither capital nor energy intensive—Barry Commoner has shown the two to be intimately related—the interest in creating more democratic forms of production is pronounced. My argument is that the proponents of worker management should recognize that the product does matter, and that worker managers who cater to the prevailing technological fix only narrow the scope of their potential influence.

In the last ten years or so a critique of the present thrust of technology has developed which has a power and depth to it that makes it too important to be ignored. It steps outside of the prevailing assump-

tions regarding technology, and questions both its methods and its goals. An essay written in 1909 by C.R. Ashbee previews a number of its themes: writing of Indian village communities, he questions whether the technological progress that has brought us away from them has improved the quality of life. The essay anticipates the critique of technology made today by questioning whether machines have not created social costs greater than their benefits. This question is echoed in the writings of Ivan Illich, who points out that labor-saving devices usually do not save labor: when production and maintenance time is factored into the overall life of a car, the average speed is reduced to around five miles an hour; likewise, labor saving appliances, when the labor costs to buy them is accounted for, do end up substituting the labor required to earn them for whatever labor time is saved.

The analysis is powerful, because it suggests the irrationality inherent in the present commitment to technology. We sacrifice freedom in work in order to be able to purchase appliances, vehicles—the accoutrements of technology—which mainly add to our sense of power. But the Faustian bargain is that we sacrifice the power to determine how or when we work, and for what purpose. The analysis demonstrates how intimately related the critique of technology and the critique of the workplace are, if we subject both to rational evaluation. The irrationality of the present commitment is further demonstrated in the field of energy. Howard Odum, who has developed the conception of net energy, points out that we are approaching a state where the energy required to extract more energy equals the energy extracted; there is not net energy gain. Odum, along with Herman Daly, Wilson Clark, Amory Lovins, and other advocates of a steady state economy have made the case against the present employment of technology in terms which are broad enough and scientific enough to demonstrate that the issue is not whether one prefers simplicity to complexity, a technology suited to human needs to a technology which dictates human needs—although these are important choices in themselves—but rather whether we are to use technology sanely, or continue to use it in ways that are in the end irrational.

Technology issues and workplace democratisation issues are thus closely related on several levels. They can be summarised as follows:

1. As Braverman has shown, technology has never been neutral when it comes to the workplace. The development of the technology of production owes far more to considerations of efficiency of control than it

does to any abstract desire for efficiency as such. Work has become highly rationalized; mental work has been split off from manual work; jobs have become mechanized. All of this makes workers more replaceable through de-skilling, hence increases managerial power over workers, and allows for lower wage scales.

2. As noted already, technology has been fueled by the urge to dominate nature. The vision of vast extensions of human power and human perception has allied the quest for scientific knowledge with the quest for domination. And the result of this is a social order in which the control of technology and its magnification of human power has led naturally to the control of other human beings. It can perhaps be said that the net result has been a social order in which the discrepancies in power are perhaps greater and more glaring than the discrepancies in income. Those who command the corporate baronies of today possess powers to shape and reshape the environment that the most powerful of feudal princes could not dream of. Thus again, technology and the workplace . . .

3. Technology, as Mumford has pointed out, was necessary for the first of the megamachines—the machines made up of armies of human beings, building pyramids, walled cities, or fighting in the first continuing mass military machines—to come into existence. A written system of record keeping was necessary, at minimum. Later as technology developed further, a more intimate symbiosis between people and machines was possible. The end result is the intimate linking of human muscles and sensory apparatus to engine, radar, infrared night vision, computer sighting devices, and so on seen in fighter planes where sensory and motor activity is adapted to the specific needs of aerial warfare. Today's megamachines link mass organization to current technology and in the process destroy the natural forms of human association which anarchists seek—the small community, the voluntary and cooperative work association, the society based on norms and social sanctions rather than on the state and armed might. As the technology becomes more powerful, so does the megamachine. But the megamachine is the antithesis of freedom in work and voluntary association around common purposes.

4. On the positive side, freedom in work is linked with an appropriate technology, based on a human scale, where neither the technology nor the organization of work make workers into machine tenders. Any efforts to create freedom in work must bring the present



runaway technology under control. Here the focus is on the technology of production. But the technology of production is linked to the technology that produces its products. The lack of concern for human beings as workers is of a piece with the manipulation of human beings as consumers: passive workers, following orders, and passive consumers, advertised into buying. Just as there should be worker control, so there should be consumer control, so that products last, are reasonably priced, and meet needs as defined by consumers, not by the producers. Technology in general, not simply its application in the workplace, needs to come under democratic control.

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There is in most human beings a natural urge toward mastery of the environment. Psychologists point out that a key factor in psychosocial development is the development of various kinds of competence—coping skills. At least part of the challenge of technology lies in the human skills that it brings into play. These can be destructive, as in the case of weapons skills or the challenge of reckless driving. But they can also be constructive as in the case of laser surgery to remove cataracts or the same driving skills applied to public transportation. I have argued elsewhere that the urge to power grows most fertile in an environment of psychic scarcity (8). In such an environment, in which the support systems traditionally provided by primary groups are lacking, the tendency to use technology as a vehicle for the expression of the power urge is strong. Where the security of community is lacking, one basic response is to seek security through power—over nature, and over other human beings.

Technology, in a society which is fragmented and devoid of the stability, rootedness in place, localism and cultural institutions which together can provide emotional security, becomes the most immediate vehicle for compensatory needs for power. It is hence not enough to combat the technology without seeking to change the social and political landscape in the direction of returning power to the local level and in the process building community. The answer to our runaway technology is social reconstruction. A healthy society would have built-in self-editing mechanisms, as Sapir called them, such that only those technologies would be adopted which were consonant with the cultural patterns. In the South Pacific, many native groups manifested this capacity—to reject western tools if they were disruptive of the established social patterns. But social patterns are the institutionalizations of certain values; where the institutions do not exist, the values are not perceived.

In anarchist circles as well as elsewhere the dispute continues as to whether the primary locus for creating change should be the workplace or the community (9). It is argued, justly I believe, that without creating freedom in work, the sense of empowerment needed to restore community control cannot be developed. At the same time, the need for community and empowerment extends beyond the workplace into the community; the experiences of daily life encompass both. At present, it would

seem as if the debate as to where to begin should remain at the level of tactics, and not be elevated to the level of theory. Those in the ecology movement and in the more political community organizing groups are sympathetic to workplace democracy. Those involved with workplace democracy are often concerned that they not alienate workers by imposing an alien ideological burden on them, one which will make their work more difficult. With significant success in either sphere, one can foresee the probability of convergence: successful experiments in workplace democracy usually result in consonant developments in the community. Conversely, it was Scandinavians, with a tradition of consumer cooperatives, who first created the West Coast plywood cooperatives—flawed but nevertheless important examples of workplace democracy in this country. Hence to argue either position to the exclusion of the other seems arbitrary and limiting.

Also, the magic of technology is experienced in both areas. As community members and consumers, people spend an average of over six hours a day watching television. They spend more hours enclosed in their vehicular steel cages, admittedly not out of choice but out of necessity. They allow their communities to be paved over by the auto-industrial complex but at the same time the youth of the society glories in the power and freedom provided by the automobile; technology both satisfies and warps human needs. As workers, there is a general blind acceptance of the continuing fragmentation of work and the subordination of workers to machines. Unions do not include technological issues in bargaining agreements (although in Europe these issues are beginning to be raised). But in general, the legitimacy of technological imperatives is beyond question, and the power-political motives which dictate the development of one technology and not another are well concealed by specialized knowledge and technocratic expertise.

The argument then is that the primary focus for an anarchist critique should be the extent to which the contemporary investment in technology has deformed both work and community life together. There can be no real freedom in work, if this is true, without a freeing of the imagination away from the dominance and preoccupation with technological forms of power and mastery. Democratizing automobile assembly lines is not enough; the real question is whether cars themselves are necessary or should be replaced, and whether there are not priorities that are so much more pressing than cars—and jets and space shots and much

else—should simply be abandoned in favor of projects that contribute more directly to human growth and human wisdom. Thus the aims of technology, and not simply the organizational methods which it uses, must be put into question. Its deformation of the social landscape must be challenged, as well as its pillaging of the natural landscape.

Again: if the simple motivational model obtained, and technology served the profit of the masters only, then the workplace could easily be seen as the primary field of struggle. But humans are the willing consumers—and slaves—of the technological imperative. While the constraints of human nature, entropy, and organizational size are always with us, these constraints differ from that imposed by technology in that technology alone not only resists efforts to organize in a liberatory fashion, but pulls in a different direction. The lure of the megamachine, its power and its glory, captivates both by its logic and its magic. Its logic is necessitarian: technology must be free to go where it will, and social forms must accommodate it. Its magic is linked with nationalism—another magic—and with corporate greed. But while greed is decried, and the current lethal form of nationalism is questioned, there is little general questioning of the general goals of technological advance, although the ecology movement is a partial exception—partial in that it questions the impact of technology on the natural environment without fully enough exploring its impact on the social environment.

The challenge is to accord technology a place within a larger vision which consciously controls subordinate elements in the interests of human growth. But to accomplish this, a level of consciousness and planning is necessary which at present does not exist. The primary expression of such a consciousness should be in the organizing of communities and workplaces which are deliberately structured so as to be participative, coherent, ecologically sound, and continuously responsive to the needs of the inhabitants. The result would be a different social reality, a culture which would act back on its members so as to encourage different behaviour patterns and different norms. In its time, Bellamy's *Looking Backward* had a widespread influence on the thinking of progressives; Bellamy societies sprang up in many places, and Bellamy's particular form of utopian socialism became the dominant form of progressive thinking. More recently Callenbach's *Ecotopia* has also been influential, though certainly less so than Bellamy's work in its time. But this proves the importance of vision as a force for change.

The primary field for the expression of alternate visions is of course society itself. We suffer an extraordinary dearth of social experimentation, when one considers the extent of dissatisfaction with what we have. Social imagination is perhaps at all times a scarce commodity. But today, large amounts of human creativity are channeled into the development of new technologies, while little if any goes into the development of new social forms. Of course new technologies pay while social experimentation is achieved if at all outside of the market system; there is no profit in developing more suitable social alternatives. This leads to a concluding thought: anarchism is known best for its refusal to accept arbitrary and coercive authority. This is the negativity of anarchism which Dave Weick has written of. Anarchism rightly stresses social control in opposition to the coercive control of the state, the corporation, the school, and whatever other institution seeks to impose its will on us. But if, as this analysis suggests, the project of creating liberatory social forms requires the surmounting of deeply imbedded constraints that are inherent in human nature and human social organization, then anarchism should engage itself in the project of constructing workplaces and communities which address these constraints and conquer them. Anarchism should exemplify the social vision which is the natural and logical expression of its principles.



## footnotes

1. I have described these constraints in some detail in two articles: "Work Management in Organizations: Paradigms and Possibilities," *Humanity and Society*, Vol II, No 2, May 1978, and "Toward a Grounded Theory of Humanist Organization," *Humanity and Society*, Vol IV, No 2, June 1980.

2. Ernest Becker in his last writings, especially "The Denial of Death" and "Escape from Evil," develops a theory of freedom as an end attainment in marked contrast to the views of Herbert Marcuse in *Eros and Civilization* and Norman O. Brown in *Life Against Death*. For a good survey of the psychology of staged development see Jane Loevinger (with Augusto Blasi), *Ego Development*.

3. This literature stems mainly from Harry Braverman's important work, *Labor and Monopoly Capital*, Monthly Review Press, 1975.



4. Mancur Olson's book, *The Logic of Collective Action*, Harvard University Press, 1965, is the best treatment of this subject.

5. In my article "Toward a Grounded Theory of Humanist Organization," above, I develop a theory of social construction based on the dialectic developed by Berger and Luckman in *The Social Construction of Reality*, which draws implications from their book which they themselves might not accept.

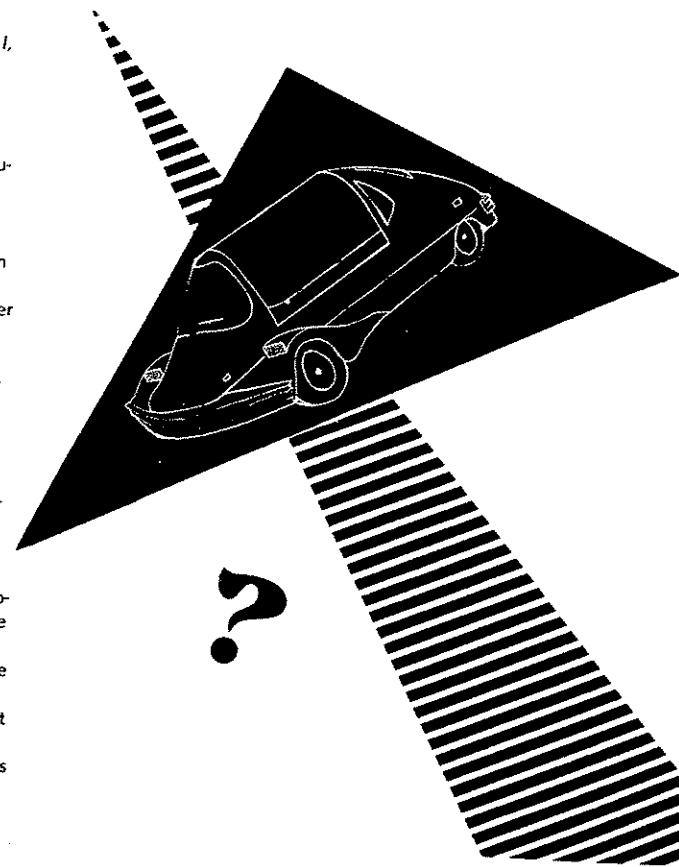
6. The idea is found in Bookchin's important essay "Ecology and Revolutionary Thought," found in *Post-Scarcity Anarchism*.

7. The idea of the 'invisible machine' serves as the major focus for Lewis Mumford's two volume work *The Myth of the Machine*, Vols I & II, Harcourt Brace and Jovanovich, 1970.

8. This argument forms the basis of "The Wasteland Culture," an article which first appeared in *Our Generation*, and saw its widest circulation in *Recent Sociology No 1*, edited by Hans Peter Dreitzel, Macmillan paperback, 1969.

9. A valuable contribution to that debate is "The Workplace and the Community: Murray Bookchin, Hannah Arendt, and the Politics of Work," by Peter Kardas, a paper given at the Anarchist Institute meetings in Montreal, June 4-6, 1982.

Note: As the putative manufacturer of a three wheel high mileage commuter car, I can probably be accused of democratizing the production process while ignoring the product. In defense I would argue that since there is no transportation revolution in sight and we are stuck with freeways, one might as well produce a sensible gas efficient vehicle to at least challenge the four wheel orthodoxy. Perhaps it's a weak argument.





## Last Writes:

### Anarchos/ Institute

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\*The first conference of the Anarchos Institute was held this past June 5-6 in Montreal, the result of an initiative taken by our Montreal comrades. It took place in the University of Quebec, whose Department of Sociology co-sponsored the event. The intended purpose of the conference was to provide a basis for a community of anarchist intellectuals in North America by establishing the Anarchos Institute—as far as anyone knows, the first of its kind in North America.

Conference events were divided into three parts: public conferences; research seminars; and organizational sessions. Two public conferences on the theme "Intellectuals and the State," chaired by Roussopoulos and Schechter and with Laurin-Frenette, Chomsky, Leguyader, Mascotto, Harrison, and Otero as speakers, attracted large, enthusiastic audiences of 3-500 people. The well put-together research seminars covered a wide range of anarchist topics—titles and copies of some papers are available upon request from Anarchos. They were lively,



argumentative, substantive, and enjoyed by most participants. The organizational meetings were open to members only—members were defined as those who had paid dues. There were about 60 members present, mostly from eastern Canada and northeastern US, though some came from Vancouver, San Francisco, Houston, and New Orleans. Observers from Europe, Milan and Paris, were also on hand. Though some reservations were expressed about its language and content/intent, for the time being Institute members accepted without dissent the preliminary statement of purpose that had been prepared by the Montreal comrades. It was felt by all that a fuller discussion of such matters should be deferred until the next general meeting of Anarchos. The initial discussion in Montreal centered upon the word "intellectual" and the issue of membership. It was generally felt that "intellectual" should not certainly not mean simply academic and that tendencies toward elitism should be guarded against, but that, at the same time, anyone concerned specifically with writing, studying, and teaching about anarchism should not be overly self-conscious about organizing themselves into their own so-defined group. It was also voted that the Institute would be based upon dues paying membership (though it was also stated that no person would be denied membership if s/he could not afford it) and that issues would be decided by a majority vote of such members.

Finally Montreal was accepted as the center for the Institute and June 1983 set as the date for the next general conference. Boston had been mentioned as a likely location for the next meeting, but this was before the occurrence of an incident that should seriously concern not only Anarchos members but all anarchists. Dimitri Roussopoulos, editor of *Our Generation* and one of the organizers of the Anarchos conference, was stopped from entering the US on his way to the anti-nuclear conference held in New York City because he was an anarchist—a troubling aftermath of what most Anarchos members had felt was a good beginning in Montreal. If non-US anarchists cannot be assured entry into the US, planning for any future Anarchos conference in the US will remain uncertain; it may also signal the renewal of an effort by the US government to stifle anarchist dissent—an effort with old historical roots. Any other such incidents should be watched for and made known.

\* Final note—economics alas! has prevailed upon us to raise prices—single issues are now \$2 plus postage/\$8 for 4 issue sub.