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Terry S. (an anarchist)

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Veronika S. (an anarchist)

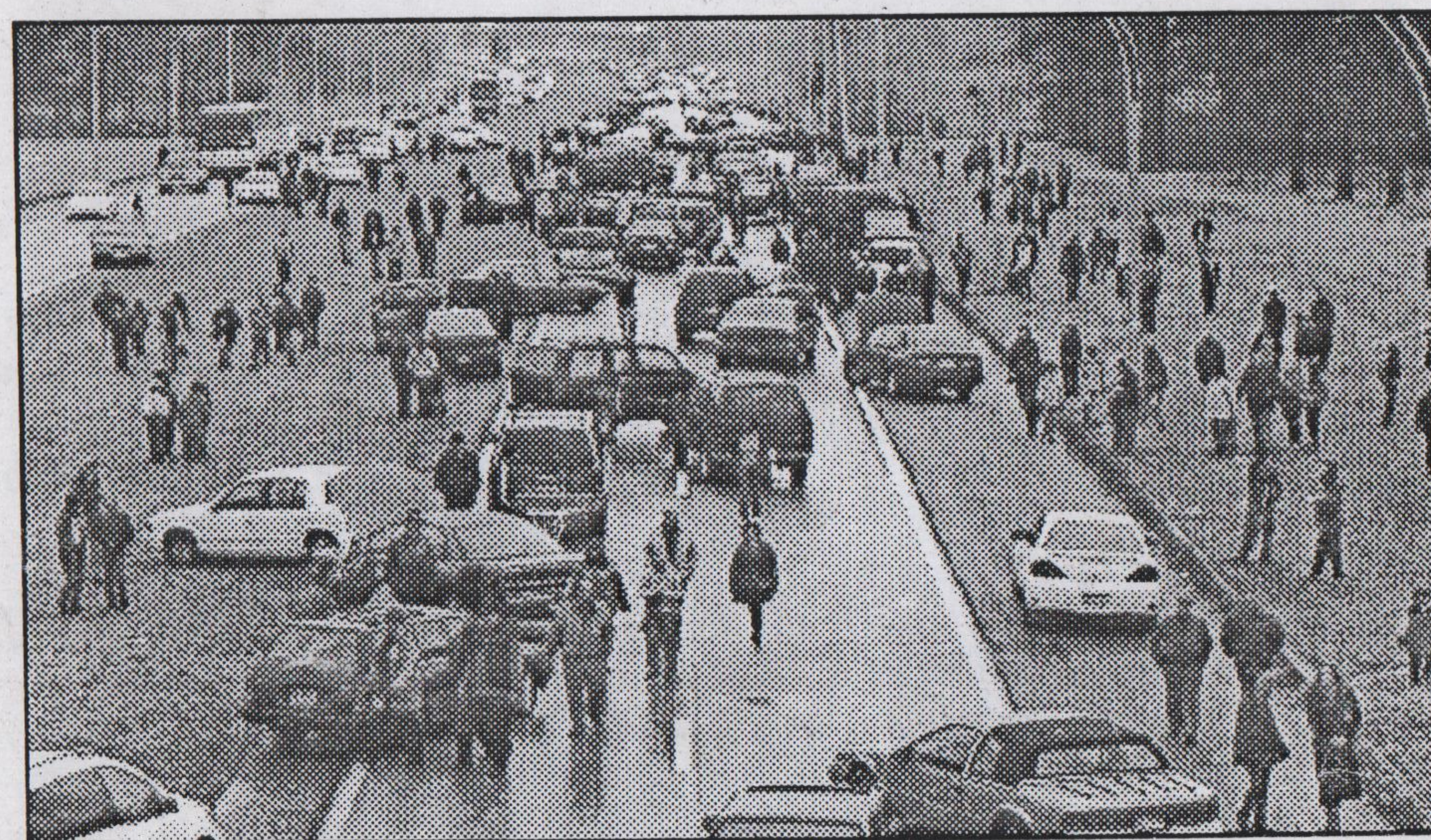
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THEODOR-FRANK-PRESS

Theodor Frank is an anarchist who managed to escape from Russian custody during the G8-summit in St.Petersburg 2006

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THE ENERGY



TO SWITCH OFF THE POWER

ANARCHIST/FREE SOCIETY AND THE ISSUE OF ENERGY

THE ENERGY TO SWITCH OFF THE POWER

ANARCHIST/FREE SOCIETY AND THE ISSUE OF ENERGY

(by Veronika Sinewali ... and those who inspired me)

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I. Oil-wars: the end or the beginning of the issue?



Nobody, no movement which aims for serious social changes, can today avoid the issue of energy. Its role in society has become so crucial that a change to its model became one of the keys to radically change of the social relations on both local and global scale in general. The fact is that contemporary oil-society is technologically and mentally based on the assumption that the oil resources will never run short. At the same time many scientists and the entire capitalistic elite are definitely aware of the fact that the fossils, as the basis for energy systems, will end soon - or to be more exact: the end of the use of oil becau-

se of its retrieval from the ground costing more in energy than its eventual output would be. The future of gas resources is just a bit longer (... while nearly all homes in US are heated by gas today!). The new energy sources and based on them new energy systems, possibly *egalitarian society* friendly, are knocking to the Earth's doors. So the *global rulers' class* consciously remain silent on this issue in order to win enough time to prepare the new monopoly- and control mechanisms over the new energy-systems.

What does it mean to the people? And what does it mean to anarchist activists?

We must be aware of this fact and head towards replacement of this transformation within capitalism with revolutionary alternatives.

It seems like the majority of the society is lost in the ongoing energy discourse or just don't take the issue seriously enough. The limits of the social analyses are the discernment of the military conflicts in the Middle East: the oil-wars. The tragedy of this observation is following: the oil-wars, which are just the beginning of rulers' reaction on the energy crises are an end of the social understanding (and so the resistance too!) of the issue. While exactly there where the critical popular analyse ends, on the recognition of wars for oil, the radical analyses finds its source.

Do I mean the anarchist position here? Let's proof it ...

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II. Anarcho-complementarist view on the energy issue

During the review of anarchist approaches towards the energy one will find out that anarchists deal with this issue from the very different perspectives. The second observation will be that these various approaches and visions support each other only in the very few moments.

As this text is written not only for anarchists but as well for those which never had an opportunity to acquaint the anarchist ideas, proposals and practices, let's give the shortest view in some most significant tendencies among contemporary anarchism:

- **anarcho-syndicalism** focuses on the labour movement, where non-hierarchically organised labour unions are potential force for revolutionary social change to replace capitalism and the State with a new society democratically self-managed by workers, where the wage system and private ownership of the means of production are



to be abolished; of course the workers self-management embraces attaining energy, its production and its supply;

- **anarcho-communism** advocates the abolition of the State and capitalism in favour of a horizontal network of voluntary associations through which everyone will be free to satisfy his or her needs; it advocates the abolition of private property through the "expropriation of the whole of social wealth" by the people

themselves, and for the economy to be co-ordinated through already mentioned horizontal network of voluntary associations; individuals and groups would use and control whatever resources they needed as the aim of anarchist-communism is to place "the product reaped or manufactured at the disposal of all, leaving to each the liberty to consume them as she/he pleases in her/his own home" (of course incl. energy);

- **anarcho-primitivism / eco-anarchism** are close anarchist concepts focusing on anarchist critiques of the origins and progress of civilization; primitivists advocate a return to non-"civilized" ways of life through de-industrialisation, abolition of division of labour or specialization, and abandonment of technology; eco-anarchists assert that social organizations must be designed to work with natural forces, rather than against; all these assumptions shape their approach toward the peoples deal with the energy issue;

Between these positions we would find certainly other anarchist approaches of more social- or green/environmentalist accents. All these concepts bring already important social-revolutionary analyses and ideas towards the achievement of a free society. Therefore, the further development of most of these theories is very welcome in the whole their diversity.

At the same time, none of these concepts seem to deal with the problem of energy globally - globally in the sense of the complexity which this issue requires. It would mean to deal simultaneously and complementary with issues of control over the energy resources, with economical concepts of its transformation, distribution and consumption, with environmental issues of pollution, sustainability and ability for renewal, or with the technocratic civilisation issue. While in reality each of them is rather focusing on only some of these aspects, stressing and developing only them very intensively. It leads to the situation that various aspects, e.g. workers or popular control over the energy stations or the development of sustainable energy or the struggle against technology are developed into details, but at the same time no complex and realistic vision exists. A vision that could help to overcome peoples' fear of revolutionary changes. A vision that people could consider as an attainable alternative today.

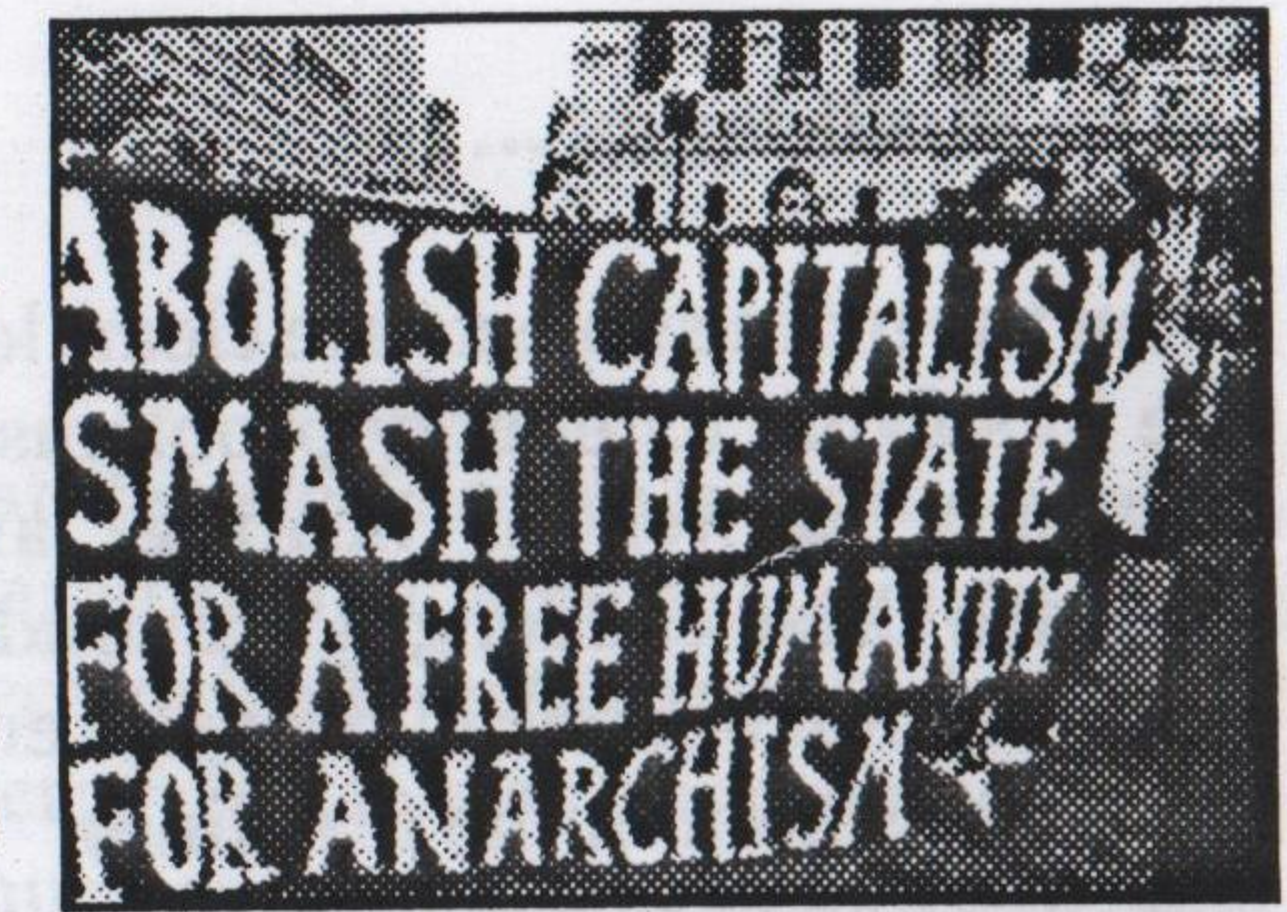
And if we assume that marginal popularity of anarchist concepts today is not only a result of the existence of the objective obstacles, like state-, power- and capitalistic- relations paradigm, but as well of very prosaic but essential fact that most of the people are just afraid to force the radical changes when the revolutionary visions does not show at least a certain level of compactness (do not mistake here compactness with any sort of program) than the necessity of more complementary anarchist positions becomes more legitimate in general. And even if many anarchists may agree that creative chaos is far more human and promising than controlled exploitation and oppression (and I might be the first one to put my name under such assumption!), the very fact remains unchanged: in contemporary oil-society the access to energy is a question of life or death, starting with the oil-wars and ending on the water supply being based on the oil supply. It is just hard to encourage people to approach the ideas (incl. anarchist ideas) which don't deal in compact way with the issue and with the reality - touching the problem with one or two fingers from only one side instead of taking it in the both hands, so that its very shape becomes clear, can lead or to nowhere or end with the nightmare ... That is why attempt to set such a vision is more than worth the effort. This is as well one of the main inspiration for me to do it. Therefore this short text should be seen as an starter of anarcho-complementarist approach towards the issue of the energy - an approach in which the most relevant elements, arguments and proposals of various anarchist perspectives are brought together.

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III. Subjects, challenges and guidelines

The subjects ...

What are than the basic subjects of such a complementary anarchist approach towards the energy issue? Understanding the anarchism as a social struggle for liberation of the individual and of society from the existence and domination of the state and capital, as a movement for the creation of the social relations that enable the existence of the society without these forms of oppressive economic and structural oppressions, and as a movement to bring people back in symbiosis with our environment - anarchist concepts towards the complex energy issue should be based on the *mutual respect and welfare of the individual, society and environment*. I will call it here **the welfare-balance**. The mutual respect and balance between these three subjects has to be set both in all communities as well as globally and become permanent determinant of social discourses, agreements and regulations... not only around the issue of energy.



... the challenges ...

When the main subjects are clear, let's name the main challenges that humanity has to face in solving its energy problems (its relation towards the energy usage) including electricity as well as heating- and power energy. In anarcho-complementarist approach these challenges are condensed into 6 issues:

- the question of control over the energy sources (thinking of stateless collectivisation and socialisation in the first line);
- the question of selection and organisation of the system of energy (concepts of decentralisation);
- the question of selection of sources of energy (ecological issues of sustainability, renewability, climate change, regular pollution and nuclear waste, as well as including social and traditional issues);
- the question of efficient production and consumption of the energy (facing the technology-civilisation issues);
- the question of distribution of the energy (issue of decentralisation and cooperation);
- the question of the appropriate transformation of the energy;

Worth mentioning is the fact that the issues appeared above in succession suggest some sort of priority: none of the following challenges can be solved in the sense of *the welfare-balance* of individual, society and environment, if the issue of the CONTROL will not be solved! This fact will be stressed quite often in this text. And, as we will see later, the issue of control in the context of energy is strongly inter-connected with the one of selection of the sources of energy; while the one of the selection of the sources is inter-connected with the question of efficiency and consumption, and this with distribution, etc. Therefore all these issues have to be dealt with simultaneously along with the elements of the same complex approach. Just another proof for unavoidability of the complementary approach...

... and the guidelines (advices, directions)

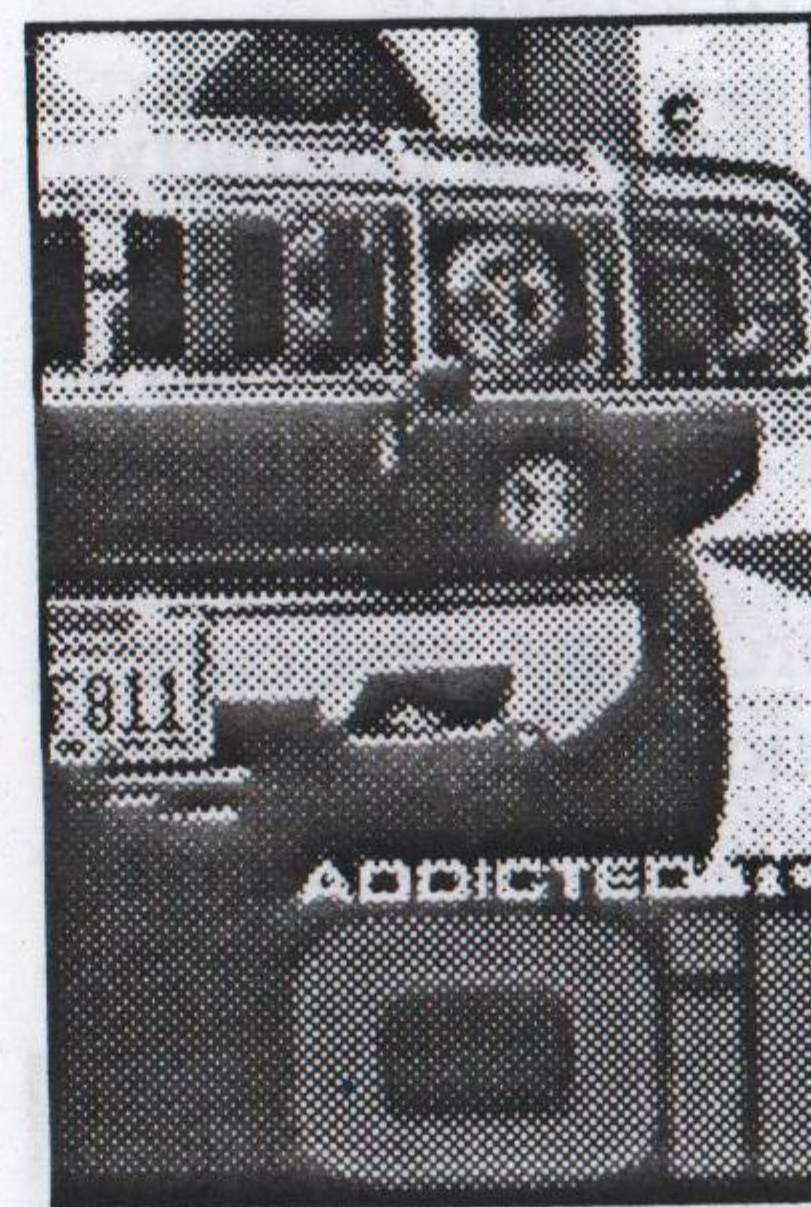
And in this way we arrive in the very core of the issue - we try to sketch some guidelines (frames) on which the anarchist/free society can abolish the existing order and build up its alternative energy system(s). Some of the guidelines already appeared next to the challenges mentioned above. These interconnected guidelines are:

- collectivisation/socialisation of the control over the energy;
- decentralisation of the energy;
- economy of the energy;
- ecology of the energy;
- inter-regional and global responsibility, cooperation and mutual support;

So these 5 guidelines form the essence of the various anarchist concepts, and as a framework, are meant to serve to put an end to the energy system we are living in today:

a system centralised in all means, ecologically devastating, socially alienating, pauperising, oppressing, creating wars ... and killing. Shortly: the energy system controlled by states- and capitalist elites, i.e. by power and profit.

Lets look a bit closer in our guidelines ...



POPULAR CONTROL and DECENTRALISATION of the ENERGY

ENERGY CONTROL

Each system of the energy depends on its sources. Choosing these source(s) determines the social, political, economic and technological processes connected with gaining, transforming, distributing and transportation of the resources and the energy itself. So the whole economic, political and technological paradigms can be reloaded by a proper choice of the energy sources. Yet, how the people can make this choice if:

Firstly: they have *no access to the decision-making processes* which are held by the state structures.

Secondly: they have *no access to the resources* which access would make it possible to think about the usage of the alternative energy sources - these resources are held by the capitalist elites (capitalist relations);

State elites and capitalist elites are linked, support each other and profit from their mutual relation.

Reclaiming the access to *decision-making processes* and to *the resources* means taking the popular control over the both.

Speaking about the popular participation in *decision-making processes*, we mean the true social debate on the energy-issues instead of debate between some US government departments, some EU-politicians, some Russian oligarchs, some Arabic oil-magnates, some leaders of westerns concerns and ... lets say - some Hugo Chavez's. We mean horizontal and federative dialogue, self-management and self-organisation of the entire population to regulate this issue as well as many other issues.

Speaking on *reclaiming the resources*, anarchists speak of popular regulation of the processes of production, distribution, trade and consumption of the goods. Among other goods is popular control over energy resources, its exploitation, transformation and distribution (not only is access to resources dominated by US, EU, Chinese, Japanese or Indian elites but the means of its transportation as well).

Anarchists assume that no radical social and environmental changes are possible as long as energy systems are determined and controlled by state elites and capitalistic concerns. Only energy systems organised from below, by cooperative communities, can provide such changes - and it means that property ownership of energy resources must be abolished - socialised.

There are many examples that the society in which the means of production (along with the energy resources needed for it) become at least collectivised, the sustainability in social and environmental contexts becomes the norm - especially in the sector of acquisition, distribution and consumption of energy.

The real character of reclaiming the decision-making processes and control over energy (from the hands of the concerns and the state bureaucrats into the hands of the society and communities) was proved by Spanish anarchists and revolutionary socialists during the **Spanish revolution of 1936**. Among other branches of industry, agriculture and services, workers organised in autonomous groups, anarchist-syndicates, federations and worker councils took control over the gas, water and electricity supply.

The most successful processes took place in Catalonia. The initiative to regulate in an anarchist way the question of property and to continue under the new structure of production was actually taken, not by the syndicates themselves but by individual workers which in these revolutionary days understood, before the syndicates did, the necessity and possibility of taking collective responsibility. They started this process already on the 19 of July, which means straight away on the day when fascist offensive started. One month later the final collectivisation took place and the production was organised by syndicates. Following are some interesting facts:



- the collectivisation spread to the whole *electricity system* in Catalonia, *gas and water supply* (electricity supply was based at this time mostly on water-plants with slight tendency to get electricity from warm-energy); all three sectors were in the private hands until the revolution;

- the collectivisation started without a specific-plan and clear goals (except the basic one of the continuation of popular supply) and organised in cooperation of ad-hoc organised workers of the CNT and the syndicates;

- the collectively organised workers of power plants immediately started to cooperate with similarly organised collectives responsible for the supply of energy resources; in both branches during the transition process nobody lost a job;

- the debts towards the capitalist credit-givers were immediately abolished which allowed investment in the collective methods and energetically estimated the wishes of the population;

- because of this, for example the prices of water and electricity decreased very quick;

- all processes were initiated from below, while the reformist leadership of some syndicates, e.g. the UGT, were trying to prevent this dynamic process while many rank and file workers, especially these organised in anarchist structures, were forcing a radicalisation of the changes, seeing for example collectivisation as just a step towards the full socialisation of the energy system;

- technical improvements were implemented, but not in order to make more profits: they helped increase efficiency and at the same time the working conditions;

- the coordination and cooperation took place between the three industries (responsible for gas, electricity and water supply); one of the ideas was to decrease the transport of energy resources (local energy production); the coordination allowed a saving of labour energy which could then be invested in innovative tasks;

- 22 of the 27 biggest factories immediately synchronised its output and distribution of raw materials - it was not only a sign of cooperation, it was a necessity in terms of capitalist blockades from abroad;

- water supply was never stopped even during the intensive bombardments of the cities;

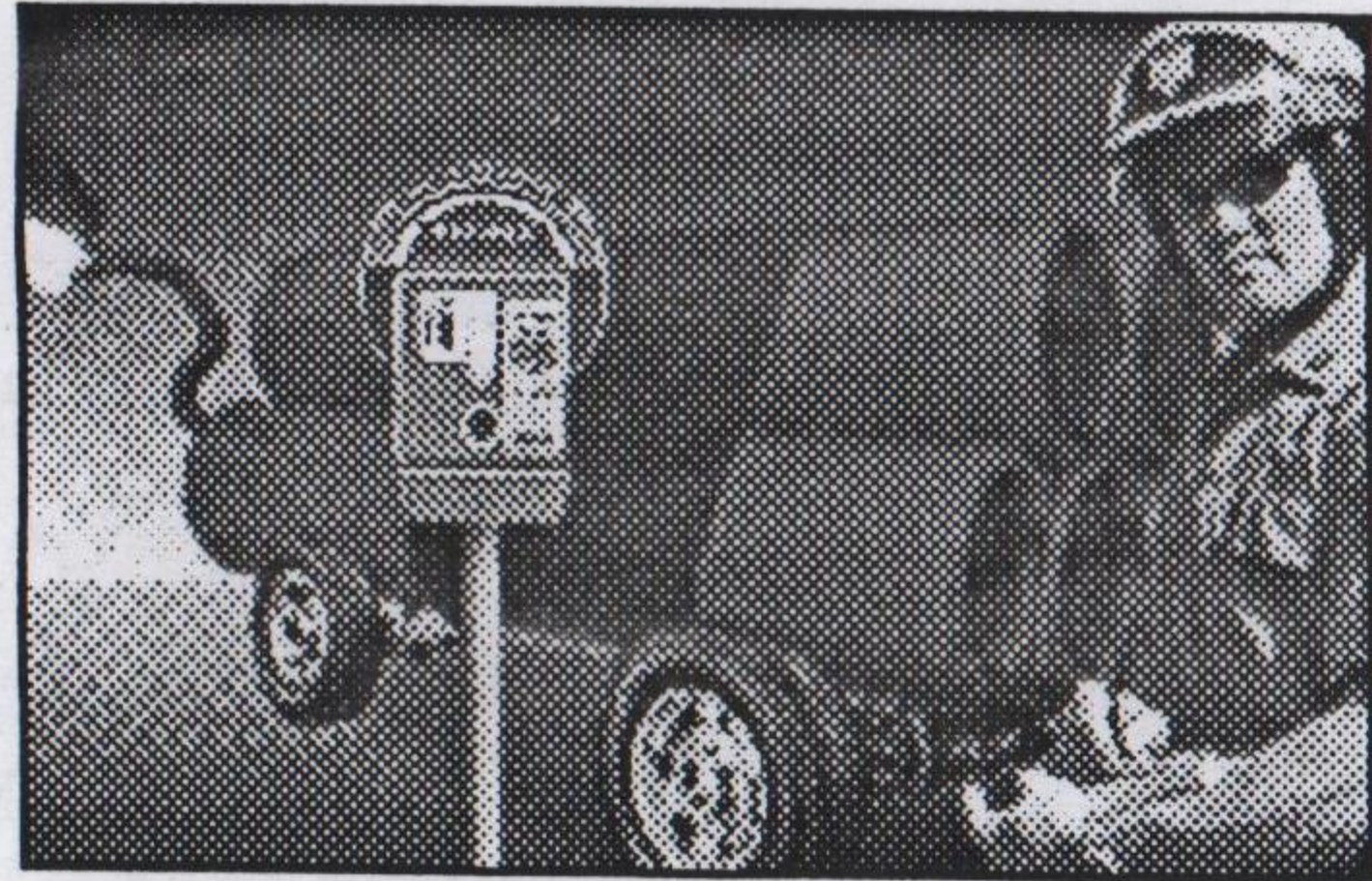
- collectivisation of the transportation sector led to development of public transport and growth of its capacities which automatically meant a decrease of the energy spent on the transport; innovations became possible, e.g. the trams were built from more economic materials;

So we can see that even if the process of socialisation of the energy circulation took place in a war situation, was haphazardly planned or prepared and could be conducted only for several months, already in such circumstances incredible progress was achieved. As we know very well, the further developments were tragically stopped by various state interventions: the offensive of the *fascists under Franco*, intervention of the *Bolshevist state of Stalin* (and its Spanish allies subverted the true uprising) and the *local republican state* which extinguished the ongoing revolution (process of socialisation was legalized and so it turned into collectivisation under state management losing its dynamic).



Another historical fact which has to be mentioned: the *ecological consciousness* was not an issue during these years, especially not in Spain which was actually just entering the stage of transformation from an agricultural into an industrial society. However, the studies towards solar- and wind energy were encouraged and were planned for use to gain electricity as well as to provide energy for water-pumps used in agricultural production. The revolutionary situation, the war and the non-existence of ecological consciousness are the main reasons why the energy supply changes during the spanish revolution 1936 had a more economic than ecological character.

Another interesting example on a smaller scale is the contemporary situation in the region of Polish Silesia where, as a result of neo-liberal processes of manipulation of the energy sector (whole local mine-industry was shut down in just a few years which led to 60% unemployment and extreme poverty and degradation of local population), unemployed miners and their families started to open self-managed primitive mine-coals called **BIEDASZYBY** (pauper-shifts). In the period 2002-2005 at least 3000 persons took part in this output which was enough to bring warm energy to their neighbourhoods and provide raw materials to the people from outside the region at very low prices. The first collective structures of work as well as distribution of the raw materials had just been set, when the Polish state started with massive criminalisation of the communities and smashed its capacities by about 90% so that there was not even time to establish any form of stable collective consciousness. However even in this short period local communities set a program of self-managed output combined with self-managed ecological re-cultivation of the region which had been largely destroyed by over 100 years of intensive output under state-management which never considered environmental and social issues as priorities (only political, personal and economic profits!). Of course this program was ignored by the local authorities while the criminalisation of the communities did the rest.



So here as well we can observe the situation in which the community takes the local energy resources under their control but is prevented from going further. The very first months have shown how deep changes in local social relations can be achieved when state control over the energy resources is replaced by the popular control.

Popular also means decentralised ...

DECENTRALISED ENERGY

Anarchists mean decentralised social relations in general. It means, among the other processes, the decentralisation of the global, continental or national, and even regional energy systems. Decentralisation of energy is here understood in the *sense of popularisation of access and control* (partly described above) but also in *sense of the space and diversity of the energy-sources*.

From anarchist perspective the processes of socialisation and decentralisation become almost the synonyms. But in context of the energy one could say that the challenge of decentralisation is even the priority one. Why? By strategical reasons - it is hardly to imagine that the free societies based on anarchist principles/relations can be set up all over the globe at the same moment - nice vision but hardly possible. It means that those communities/regions which will reach their liberation earlier than the others

will find themselves in a sort of isolation, especially in regards to energy, for some period. In order to not fall back on dependence on the state/capitalist enemy's resources, they should reach their self-efficiency in advance through the creation of local energy systems. So next to the main idea behind the decentralised energy-systems the tendency of its decentralisation should be seen as well as the strategically measure in the period of on going libertarian insurrections and revolutionary changes. Of course local energy systems controlled by few, and not under popular control, has still nothing in common with the anarchist option - that is why the challenge of control remains fundamental while decentralisation its necessary complement.

Decentralisation of energy in the sense of popularisation of access and control means an end of the control-monopoly over the energy resources and energy-industry by oil-corporations, oil-sheiks, war-lords and governments. This should be expropriated by the people themselves, in practise to the communities who will carry on production under new principles.

The best example of the dramatic results of the centralisation of control over energy resources, as well as focusing on only one central source of energy in today's world is that the regions with the least of their own resources (the importers) are the hardest hit by each rise in the price of oil. However, here we have to be more exact so as to not confuse anarchist concepts with or example contemporary EU-energy-politics which is also interested in breaking the monopoly - the monopoly of US-oil-companies and Russian-gas-government, in order to raise the EU position in geo-political discourses. This is connected with the growing dependence of the EU on Russian gas: the role of gas as an energy medium is expected to grow in the EU for next 25 years reaching about 33% of all energy mediums - a quarter of it coming from Russia.

So for those who just become familiar with the anarchism and to avoid any misunderstandings here: the anarchist concept is about the abolishment of any property ownership over the resources or energy systems in general while the control over the processes of its utilisation, transformation, distribution and consumption is to be put in the hands of communities which, as it stands in most anarchist concepts, coordinate developments through horizontal and federal cooperation.

Decentralisation of the energy in the geographical sense means a return to the regional (sometimes based on traditional, sometimes innovative...) acquiring of energy - energy being gained close (or within) the community. There is a long list of arguments why it makes sense. Just few of them:

- it can dismantle the dominating global energy system (oil-society) and replace it with many local and cooperative ones;
- energy independence means independence of some people from others, it means a dismantling the power structure;
- huge amounts of energy can be saved in terms of decreasing the transport of the energy from energy centres to the periphery;

- local energy supports other local branches, e.g. most food products travel today up to 1000 miles on average before reaching the consumers (food distribution today relies mostly on the oil supply);

- geographical decentralised energy systems supports research, studies and developments of locally available, relevant and community friendly (in ecological and in social sense) sources of energy;

Decentralisation of energy in the sense of diversity of its sources means ending the reliance on the use of fossil fuels, especially oil and gas. In this sense, each community decides what kind of energy system, and based on what sources it wants to use and develop in their region. The regional wind-parks, solar-power-stations, biomass-stations, water-power-stations, ecologically improved small scale fossils (coal) mines, or even the regions of minimum of energy usage (which collectively decided to abandon the dictate of technology) would replace the monopoly of gas and oil. Each community decision however can be determined:

- by circumstances and available possibilities (case of the Spanish revolution);
- by local cultural and social traditions (case of BIEDASZYBY);
- by ecological arguments.

But in all cases these locally determined energy systems start meaning more to the community, energy is closer to the communities, the process of acquisition and distribution is connected with the social and ecological problems more in touch with the people - and not something alienated, being organised and given by some *good uncles from the east* or from anywhere else. Therefore, it can be better organised, controlled and developed. Some communities would decide in the beginning to stick to the (traditional) fossil energy sources (here we could bring again the example of the BIEDASZYBY). It could be use just a transitional period. On what is based this assumption? When the local community is in full control of the energy system certainly with time it will tend to more ecological, cheaper and community-friendly sustainable sources (especially because wind-, sun- and bio-mass energy can be had in most places).

But next to the respect towards environment the one towards the people's traditional and social links to some sources of energy should be part of the transformation. In the case of BIEDASZYBY it could mean that the community with large group of the professional miners would need time at first to develop environmental consciousness and then learn the new skills needed to gain the energy from different sources - let us say: building solar-panels. In the spirit of the *welfare-balance* between individual, society and environment, the tempo of such transformation would relay on all 3 factors. **No social disaster should take place on costs on ecological development**, especially if we realise that we are carrying on our shoulders the baggage of some industrial revolutions already. People living in poverty will hardly be ready to take the environmental issues as their priority!



ECONOMY and ECOLOGY OF THE ENERGY

ECONOMY OF ENERGY

Similarly to coherence of the aspects of control- and decentralisation of energy, the aspects of economy- and ecology - of energy are very coherent.

One of the big arguments against decentralised energy is that the alternative energy systems based on sustainable sources of energy are not able to provide the necessary amount of energy. This is a very disputable issue with very different facts and analyses. Whatever assumption is true, anarchists will always emphasise the need to decrease the use of energy by civilisation. If the argument that "the quantity of energy provided by oil and gas cannot be quickly replaced by other sources of energy" is true - for anarchists it is proof of the necessity of drastically decreasing global production, consumption and transportation of energy. **Just using less energy and this used use much more efficiently!** There are so many ways to decrease the usage of energy that its presentation must be shorted here. The already above shown practices by anarchists during the Spanish revolution, in their provision of free public transport (as well as the example of infamous Cuba during its own Peak Oil Crisis in the 90's) shows how it can work in reality. Of course there are other more radical concepts worth to consideration.



Another tool for more efficient energy usage: described earlier processes of *geographical decentralisation of energy* and of *implementation of various energy systems* results in a situation where most of the energy would be acquired locally and used for local needs. These needs can be quite precisely described by each community or regional federation. Excess energy that is produced can be used for exchange and as solidarity benefits for regions with energy deficits. It means that popularly controlled and decentralised energy systems would put into effect a general decrease in consumption and therefore production as well.

In between the shortest report on *civilisation energy progress*: the first billion barrels of the oil used mostly for energy-production was consumed in 125 years, while the second one just in 30 years!!! And the *nuclear energy alternative progress*? The number of nuclear power-stations have reached already about 450 and have had to rise to about 1600 world-wide in order to cover the energy needs of today's civilisation. No comments are needed here.

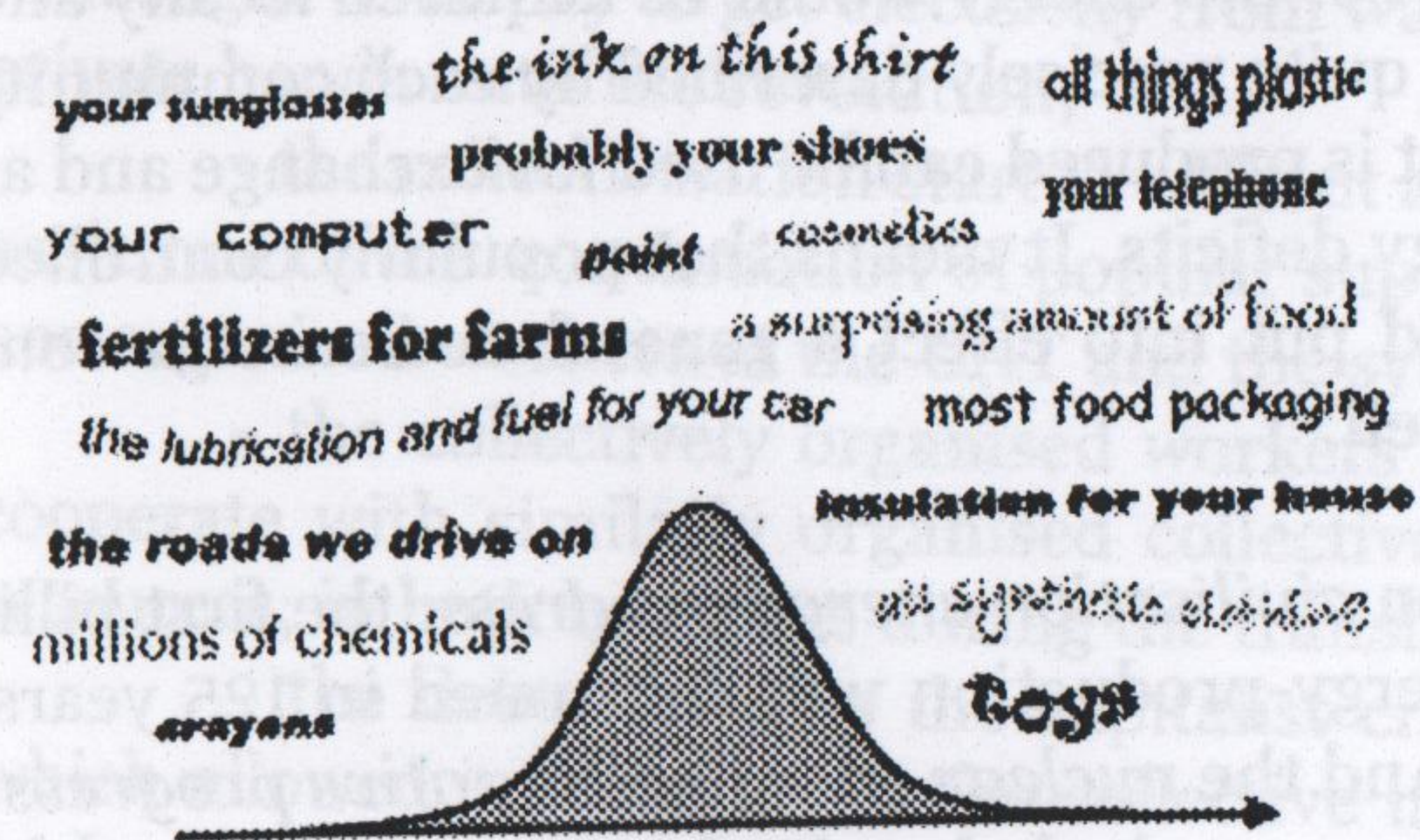
It is not really best place to make the jokes but ... it even happens from time to time that the energy exploitation decrease under the capitalist dictate ... recently in Iraq for example. The output of energy decreased from 2,5 million Barrels on 1,5 million Barrels during last 2 years ... Anarchists obviously mean decrease of energy-usage in way described on the previous page rather as a result of capitalist wars. Iraq decrease of oil-output had no relevance to deeper social processes (even if its certainly linked to the ongoing insurrectionary resistance of local population) - more to increase of the oil-market prices.

Thank as well to the geographical decentralisation of energy and its local acquisition, huge amounts of energy spent today on energy-transport could be saved.

Thinking of economy of the energy in general, the costs of traditional energy rise while the costs of the renewable fall. In the case of renewable sources their costs are limited just to the production of installations, but almost not costs of exploitation itself (except of bio-energy of work).

Using the example of the Spanish revolution we can see that the anarchist-organised collective production made possible a decrease in the number of people employed on the factory-floor to spend more (intellectual) energy in studying the new technologies. It could for example effect a development of less energy-absorbing (wasting) systems of production of goods, based on a decrease of technology and industrialisation. More (intellectual) energy could be invested in raising the consciousness of the people on the aspects of consumption which would lead to its decrease (without a actual decrease in the standards of living) what respectively would lead to an end of technocracy-mania: without ending in technophobia but in a decrease of the technology and production in many sectors. Public discussion towards over-technological aspects of life and its possible decrease could be put into effect. This discussion would begin from below, in the local communities, and continue on the inter-regional levels.

What's made from oil?



Peak Oil

Finally, the decisions about the amount of energy that is consumed and which has to be produced should be discussed by councils of producers and consumers - another case from the Spanish experience of 1936.

And the last thing: the last period of fossil-fuel-energy might be consciously and carefully used to build up for the sustainable society. In this sense, e.g. instead of new cars and weapons, many wind-turbines or solar-panels could be built.

THE ENERGY AND THE ECOLOGY



Anarchists agree on last decades' analyses by the ecological scientists and environmental activists calling for a move away from the ecologically catastrophic fossil and nuclear sources of energy (as it was mentioned before there are about 450 nuclear power-stations world-wide right now). The ecological problems connected with the fossils and atomic-energy are known: emission of coal-dioxide, injection of chemical agents into the soil (for example, practices of Lukoil-Perm in Pavlovo region in Russia) ... the greenhouse effect ... climate change ... Change of energy use to an ecological renewable one is widely supported by anarchists.

Than the current tendencies are quite different. The global usage of gas grows. In China alone by about 40 mld m yearly (mostly based on local resources and growing production), and in the EU as well (partly as result of fear of nuclear energy). *The global scream for oil* is also growing, which is also connected with the explosion of Chinas economy, besides others. Globally use is about 83 million barrels per day. And this in a situation where the capacities of the exploiters, transformers and transporters of the oil have reached their limits (Peak Oil) - for 20 years we have been extracting more oil than the stores of newly discovered resources. Atomic-energy and "clean-coal-energy plants" are facing their renaissance today as well.

And even if already in the seventies the French and American scientists proved the possibility of full coverage of global energy needs by renewable ones this is still not practised. The main arguments used by those in power in order to stop the popularisation of the RES (Renewable Energy Sources) are:

1. *High costs ?* Society and the economy are supposedly not able to cover them. Costs are only connected with building the infrastructure and new technologies and it does cost a lot of energy in fact - however, under the popular control, the last years of fossil-energy could be used consciously to build up these technologies and infrastructures. At the same time, the exploitation of the renewable resources will cost then almost nothing and transportation costs will decrease as the energy will mostly be locally produced;

2. *Too long a transitional period ?* Installation of one windmill takes about 1 week, of the wind-power station about 5-15 years. With today's tempo of growth of wind-energy it would take about 10 years to reach the level of 20% of the global energy-needed. In an anarchist society in which the usage (and waste) of energy rapidly decreases and there are no *patents on the discoveries of progressive technologies*, and

therefore each community has access to knowledge of these technologies, the transitional process could reach an extreme dynamic;

3. *Problem of accumulation is not solved?* This is again the question of into where the *intellectual energy of the population* is being directed; solving of this problem can be only possible when the monopoly of *the technologies based on profits* will be abolished; but even now there are developed some interesting accommodation methods like air-compression-power-stations or pump-storage-stations;

4. *RES have not enough capacity compared to the needs of today's civilisation?* There are considerations toward bio-fuels in terms of the amount of energy necessary to reach them, as well as the fact of how much farmland is necessary to cover the needs of the auto industry for example - so the question of *economy of energy* rises again here; at the same time the facts are following: the sun and its derivatives (wind, water, waves, biomass) provides the earth daily with 15000 times more energy than the civilisation uses; wind alone has the capacity of providing 40 times more electricity and 5 times more of general global demand of energy; the possibility of the full coverage of needs by renewable energies were already presented in 1978 in France (Group de Bellevue) and in 1979 in US (Union of Concerned Scientists);



While anarchists would replace the fossil and atomic energy systems by the decentralised systems based on renewable sources (people and environment friendly), today we can observe the artificially created revival of nuclear-energy. Here, except for the *ecological* (nuclear pollution or disaster) and *political* (atomic energy is the most elitists form of) arguments against the nuclear energy, the very *pragmatic* one has to be said: according to some American scientists estimations the increase of

nuclear-energy would lead very quickly to the end of the global uranium reserves.

In this sense, the environmental aspect of anarchism sees the post-fossil and post-atomic sources as necessarily safe, sustainable and renewable (sun-energy, wind-energy, bio-gas, biomass). At the same time the capitalist profiteers have no interest in promoting them so even the "ecological perspective" brings to anarchists to necessity of struggle against the authorities.

The G8 understands "energy security" as safe conditions for providing and profiting from the resources, i.e. safe business! The G8 proposals to solve the worlds energy-security problem is to increase the output of resources and the further development of the network of its transportation for thousands of kilometres. This concept should be overshadowed by a call for a development of alternative renewable energy systems. As the anarchists are not interested in making profits, our understanding of

energy-security is as different as simple: we want energy-systems to be safe for ourselves and for the environment. The energy systems massively based on fossil resources are as safe as a ticking time-bomb and there are thousands of reports on it.

However, two important remarks have to be added:

At first, the decrease of the global energy usage as well as a drastic decrease in usage of fossil fuels will create the circumstances in which marginal and local usage of the fossil fuels will not be dangerous anymore and therefore in some regions acceptable, especially during the period of transition to ecological energy, but as well as supplementary resources.

Secondly, it has to be emphasised once again that the ecological tendency can not completely overshadow the social aspects.

INTER-REGIONAL AND GLOBAL CONSCIOUSNESS, COOPERATION AND MUTUAL SUPPORT



Decentralised ecological energy, economically used, based on popular access and control of all energy resources, is still not an anarchist option if the common cooperation and mutual support between the communities and regions is not being practised. There is no place for competitive relations within anarchist social relations.

It is obvious that some regions and communities will always have some problems with energy. It can be a result of the natural capacities of the region (less winds, less sun, less water, some environmental disasters, etc.), but also through the mistakes made in the capitalist past (too high a technologically based life which uses too much energy therefore the process of decreasing dependence on the technology being very difficult; completely exploited regions; regions devastated by wars so needing more energy to rebuild its infrastructure, etc.) or just by community based difficulties to move forward with decentralisation of control, changing the community consciousness, transformation of energy systems, etc. To prevent such regions and communities from falling into deep energy depressions and isolation inter-regional support is needed.

The same in terms of the global problems which are already created by technocratic capitalist society, like climate change, the greenhouse effect, nuclear waste etc. They cannot be forgotten nor left for some particular communities to be solved (e.g. on those which live in a region with nuclear waste that was accumulated in the past). Therefore global consciousness and cooperation is needed: in struggle against oppressors and in daily relations building free society.

IV. Energy to switch off the power



It is always interesting to hear non-anarchist personalities making statements which prove and support anarchist concepts. In this sense I will surprisedly quote here one German parliamentarian who recently stated the following: "With the change to renewed energies, as well as to completely new energy ways, everything would change. From commercial into non-commercial primary-energies, from a few huge power-stations and refineries into many semi- and small ones,

from international into regional energy infrastructures, from emission-full into emission-free energies. Finally the property system will be forced to change too". However, what is wrong illusion of this person, is that this transformation to renewable energy systems will come sooner or later automatically, like afternoon rain comes in the tropics. No - it will not come just like that because the political and economic elites have analysed these issues and therefore are better informed than we are what these changes would mean. That is why they will do all they can to avoid this transformation, or prepare themselves for making the best advantage of this transformation and to keep their class in power. In both cases our future and the future of our planet has to be fought for. The popularisation of radical concepts and undertaken of struggle are the only options for us.

On the socio-economic level, today's global energy situation (if nothing radically happens before) will result in a continuous rise of the prices of energy. It will make more and more people start questioning the issue of the energy-systems. Many of them are already now calling for a revival of other fuels like lower grade oil, coal or wood, and anarchists, as environmentally conscious, should deal with this tendency too. But thinking on alternative energy-systems must bring people to also think about alternative energy-sources, about its control and about the energy distribution systems. And this should stimulate thinking about the social structures and status-quo in general.

As well this text should not remain just a dry theoretical set of ideas, and is meant rather as an appeal to all



anarchists and sympathisers of the free anarchist society for common efforts and struggles to make OUR dreams true...

... to all activists and scientists interested in this issue to give more shape to the above presented visions

... to all publishers for their propagating

... to all workers and unemployed for keeping the spirit of the collectivisation/socialisation of energy sector as well as other sectors of production and distribution goods

... to all consumers for changing their consciousness from individualistic, passive and unreflective to social, active and ecological.

The last remark is to stress again the crucial point of this approach: A key to the revolutionary changes within the global energy system is the question of control. This we have firstly TOGETHER take away from the leaders (oppressors) and spread amongst us all! It means that revolutionary energy is needed in order to change the system of energy and to switch off the power relations. In this sense everyone is an energy transformer, and as a multitude people are the most powerful power plant of the most sustainable and renewable energy which in fact ... already is in their hands. Capitalism needs its endless growth and its continued growth in usage of energy. So the energy crisis is a chance for real radical changes! It should not be wasted. Let's make a use of it! Let's use the energy (issue) as an important tool to switch off the power. And as state power is a stabiliser for the capitalist power - Let's make both of them history!

Veronika Sinewali
(Abolishing the Borders from Below,
Network Against G8)

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