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ANARCHISM FREEDOM POWER

BY WILLIAM O. REICHERT

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Anarchism, freedom, and power

WILLIAM O. REICHERT

THE CENTRAL PROBLEM IN POLITICAL SCIENCE TODAY is not the question of methodology, as many people seem to believe, but the problem of constructing limits to the expansion of the Leviathan state. It becomes ever more clear that the "modern democratic state" has evolved more along the lines of the model that Hobbes constructed than the one fashioned by Locke. The idea of socialism has compounded the difficulties of delineating limits to the sphere of state power. As the modern democratic welfare state has increased the scope of its operations, bringing new material comforts to its citizens, the state has become more and more monopolistic in terms of the power it exercises over the individual. It is no exaggeration to say that we stand in awe and fear of Leviathan today, for the creature we have brought into being and nurtured over the past several hundred years now appears to be out of control, threatening our very existence as a free society. It is to this problem, largely ignored by contemporary political scientists, that the philosophy of anarchism is basically directed.

The most distinctive characteristic of anarchist theory, according to its proponents, is that it is the only modern social doctrine that unequivocally rejects the concept of the state with its omnipresent evils of political power and authority. For a time during the early years of the American republic, Jeffersonian democracy also praised the wisdom of setting limits to the power of government. But although Jefferson disagreed with Hamilton as to the proper ends for which state power might legitimately be employed, he never went so far as to advise its total abolition. Anarchists view Jefferson's tendency to compromise with political power as the fatal weakness of democratic theory. Other liberal democrats throughout the history of America have applauded the wisdom of maintaining curbs and safeguards around the exercise

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of political power, never once realizing that they had undertaken an impossible task. In what now appears to have been one of the last genuine efforts of liberals to keep Leviathan under control, the philosophers of political pluralism stoutly voiced their opposition to the growing power of the state, urging that its ever increasing power over the citizen be shared with the major primary social groupings. But as Professor William Ernest Hocking pointed out at the time, the pluralists declined to take the essential step of divesting the state of its monopoly over the instruments of force and coercion. It was totally unrealistic to assert, as the pluralists did, that political power might be shared by a diversity of associations within society when the state stood above them, armed with the means to make them all subservient to its superior will.¹ It is not strange, accordingly, that the proponents of the pluralist idea have dropped completely out of sight, leaving behind nothing more than a claim to be remembered as an interesting historical movement. Nor is it strange that the idea of liberalism itself seems to be in a moribund condition.

Whatever other faults it may possess, the idea of anarchism may not be criticized on the grounds that it accommodates its basic principles to the demands of power. Anarchism is distinguished from other political philosophies, in fact, precisely because of its rejection of power and formal organization. To reject political power, of course, is to reject the state. Anarchism, therefore, is forced to defend the difficult argument that the state ought not to exist, since its total effect is negative rather than positive. This, obviously, is a Herculean task. Yet we can find an impressive number of responsible observers to support this contention. Perhaps the strongest indictment ever made against the state was made by the historian Henry Thomas Buckle when he wrote in the first volume of his *History of Civilization in England* (Vol. I; New York, 1857) that "no great political improvement, no great reform, either legislative or executive, has ever been originated in any country by its rulers". Modern legislatures, to be sure, have kept themselves busy grinding out legislative enactments. But, Buckle argued, any reforms they have effected were not the creation of something new and positive but the undoing of wrongs which were themselves caused originally by legislative enactments. Political science, moreover, ought not to let the fact that the state has existed for a long, long time influence it into thinking of the state as an absolute necessity for the existence of social life. Those who would reach a clear understanding of the state and its nature must not allow themselves to be overawed by the great power and influence it presently exerts over men in society.² There is no doubt, of course, that social life as it is now carried on rests heavily upon the control exercised over people by government. But it is erroneous to suppose that the state is a natural and inevitable aspect of social life. The fact is that the state is not something that men create spontaneously by themselves, as Locke suggested. On the contrary, the state does not arise from the "instinct of association" but from the "instinct of domination".³ The state and its power arise outside of social life and are forced upon men by their

leaders who would dominate their lives for their own purposes. For as A. Bellegarigue, a follower of Proudhon, has written: "Power must of necessity be exercised for the benefit of those who have it and to the injury of those who have it not; it is not possible to set it in motion without harming on the one hand and injuring on the other."⁴ Robert Michels, who wrote his *Political Parties* more than a dozen years later, may have been influenced by Bellegarigue when he proclaimed that oligarchy is implicit in organized power and that a people who delegate their authority actually abdicate their sovereignty. Any political science that is to be worthy of its name must start from a recognition of these conditions.

All too frequently, anarchism has been treated derisively by political scientists. In calling for the abolition of government and the destruction of its monopoly of power, the anarchist appears to be a ridiculous figure in the eyes of those who are knowledgeable in the ways and functions of political power. Political scientists, excluding a small percentage of adamant dissenters, are generally agreed that power is the force which causes the political world to spin about on its axis. How, then, can anarchists expect to be taken seriously when the main thrust of their argument is totally in contradiction to the very foundation upon which the entire structure of modern political science rests? Here we find that anarchists of all schools unequivocally agree that the error is on the part of political scientists and not themselves. The necessity of organizing the social world in terms of political power, they maintain, is not a fact but a supposition. It can be demonstrated empirically, of course, that men do seek and respond to power and that it plays a significant role in human relations as society is constituted today. But anarchists charge that where political scientists err is in their acceptance of this assumption as final and inevitable.

As George Woodcock perceptively notes, anarchism, rather than being a mere doctrine of politics, is essentially concerned with fundamental questions of a moral nature.⁵ Consequently, when political scientists claim that power is a basic "fact" of the political world, anarchists retort that all facts are relative to the social situation in question. It may well be that men do respond to power, as Hobbes so emphatically proclaimed. But it is also true that their response to power is conditioned by their acceptance of authority as legitimate. Let them once question the right to rule of those who command them, and the structure of power comes tumbling down under its own weight. Today's facts, the anarchist insists, are tomorrow's dead falsehoods.

What is really at issue here is not so much whether there is such a thing as political power as the question of whether the exercise of power by one individual over another can ever be called legitimate. Anarchists recognize full well that power is a definite and necessary characteristic of all social situations. But they draw a careful distinction between social and political power. So long as there are people there will naturally exist subtle forces of social control which make life possible. Anarchists deny, however, that this control must contain an element of coercion, which is what transforms social force into poli-

tical power. Viewing the world from a position of libertarian concern, anarchists maintain that political power can never be acceptable in their eyes because it crushes out freedom. And where freedom is absent, social life becomes impossible.

The libertarian character of anarchist thought was clearly grasped by Peter Kropotkin, the chief European theorist of nineteenth-century anarchist communism. In discussing the nature of the state, Kropotkin, taking a long view of the history of civilization, pointed out that men from the beginning of time have fallen into one or another of two categories.⁶ On the one hand are those who hold to the Roman or imperial tradition, in which they place their trust in hierarchy and formal political authority. The adherents of this view maintain that public order is impossible without the state and that men are incapable of governing themselves without the assistance of formal institutions of social control and leadership. Where organized government is absent, the imperialists maintain order and liberty are also non-existent. The centralization of government within the modern democratic state has been forced by the imperialists, for they have been highly successful in convincing the mass of men that social life without the guiding hand of the state is an impossibility. Americans need only look as far as their own Alexander Hamilton for a model of imperialist thought. The other tradition Kropotkin makes mention of is the popular or federalist tradition. If we seek a name which will convey its precise meaning, Kropotkin wrote, we might well call it "the libertarian tradition". The libertarian, unlike the imperialist, distrusts hierarchy, authority, and organized government. Convinced that men are naturally created for a genuine social life, although they may not yet have attained any significant degree of this potential, the libertarian, according to Kropotkin, denies that organized compulsion and force are essential to order and peace. To the contrary, he held, human freedom is only possible where men abandon the state and seek to create social life through the principles of federalism, mutual aid, and self-discipline. For many anarchists, especially in America, the federal principle advanced by Kropotkin is not essential. But Kropotkin's emphasis upon the necessity of renouncing formal social control by government and turning instead to the individual as the central focus of social life is valid in the eyes of all anarchists.

When anarchists speak of liberty as being fundamental to their basic philosophy, they are not engaging in mere rhetoric. "Liberty", as one American anarchist wrote, "is not a declaration, or even an inspiration, it is a science."⁷ Undoubtedly this is a large claim. But we must understand that the anarchist is perfectly serious when he makes it. Much at Plato created an architectonic political philosophy with justice as its keystone, so the anarchist conceives of political science as being a body of knowledge ultimately devoted to the attainment of human freedom. If we may believe Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, the philosophy of anarchism admits of no absolutes, for it recognizes that the social world is in flux and that no truth, therefore, can be taken as final. Yet anarchists insist that the idea of human liberty, while it cannot

be made an absolute, must be maintained as the highest of all human values. Freedom, that is to say, is the essential characteristic of a fully developed humanity. It has never yet been completely realized in any human society that we know of. Nevertheless it must not be lost sight of as the guiding star of all social science, for to be human is to be free.

Political scientists influenced by the writings of A. Lawrence Lowell generally accept the view that the political sphere is divided up among radicals, liberals, conservatives, and reactionaries. But the fine distinctions Lowell thought he saw have little substance in the eyes of the anarchist. For the anarchist there are basically two, and only two, political persuasions. Over against libertarianism, he would place authoritarianism. The anarchist, or libertarian, is essentially anti-authoritarian in viewpoint. Where liberals, reactionaries, and even some so-called radicals, such as the state socialists, accept the authority possessed by the state as essential to the maintenance of the social order, anarchists insist that all authority of a political nature be abolished. Here we must note that anarchism defines authority as the "power of coercion of one person over another".⁸ As one reads deeper into the intricacies of anarchist literature, it becomes evident that the authority of moral values, ideas, and aesthetic inspiration is not regarded with the same disdain as is political and religious authority. Much misunderstanding of anarchist philosophy stems from the circumstance that most people overlook this fine distinction.

In his lecture on Herbert Spencer delivered in the Sheldonian Theatre at Oxford on June 7, 1906 (reprinted in *For Liberty: An Anthology for Revolt*, ed. H. Bool and S. Carlyle [London, n.d.]), Auberon Herbert, the noted English anarchist, pointed out that most of the confusion which is found in the area of political thought is attributable to the fact that those who seek power are unable to remain true to the great principles of humanity. Those who truly value freedom, Herbert suggested, must never allow themselves to be enticed by the idea that political power can be used to establish liberty among men. There is unanimous agreement among anarchists on this point. Max Nomad, himself something of an anarchist, gives expression to this view when he writes that all political organizations desire "to maintain [their] power at any price; a desire which can truly be called the 'original sin' of all politics and all politicians, whether conservative or revolutionary".⁹ No anarchist worthy of the name, then, can ever allow himself to embrace the theory that political power and organization can be employed to establish liberty within society. It is not merely that men are corrupted by power, as liberals like Acton believe. When one opts for power, he chooses the way of authoritarianism rather than the way of libertarianism. Anarchists steadfastly assert that all social science must remain a hopeless confusion so long as men persist in accommodating social science to the facts of power. Those who continue to view society as resting inevitably upon compulsion must forever remain impotent in any meaningful realization of freedom. They may pile "scientific statement" upon "scientific statement", but they will never reach the promised land of free society. Only the

libertarian—the individual who dares to think in terms of informal social control—can be taken seriously regarding his desire to see liberty realized upon earth.

Another of the flagrant misconceptions of anarchist theory which have stood in the way of an intelligent understanding of its nature is the notion that anarchists would do away entirely with all forms of social organization. C. Northcote Parkinson gives us a classic example of this in his assertion that “anarchy, if it can be termed a form of rule, means the refusal of a large number to be ruled at all”.¹⁰ It is this misconception which leads to the often expressed bias that anarchy is synonymous with the breakdown of law and order. But it is emphatically not true that anarchists advocate the abolition of all forms of organization. Some of the more extreme individualists, such as William Godwin, have maintained that any conscious organization of society is to be avoided at all costs. But most collectivists, and a great many of the individualists as well, have recognized the necessity of some form of social machinery to carry on the affairs of day-to-day living. But administration in an anarchist society would be fundamentally different from administration in existing society. Consistent with the anarchist’s insistence that liberty be the criterion by which all things are measured, all social organization would of necessity have to be a free organization rising spontaneously from the natural social disposition of men.¹¹ Anarchists do not suppose for a minute that all men would ever live in harmony without the disrupting conflicts which from time to time set one man or group of men against another. They do maintain, however, that the settlement of conflict must arise spontaneously from the individuals involved themselves and not be imposed upon them by an external force such as government.

The anarchist’s conception of freedom derives from his conception of man. Refusing to engage in either a theological or “scientific” condemnation of human nature, the anarchist maintains that no science of human society is possible that does not rest upon the assumption that man possesses an unlimited potential for growth and development. Without engaging in any questionable exercises in metaphysics, the anarchist nevertheless argues that a free society is only possible where there is widespread agreement that man is by nature a free being. “Without the idea of a free man, the anarchist idea falls to the ground: because the future society cannot exist, or its beginnings be nurtured, without him.”¹² When the modern anarchist speaks of freedom, he has in mind the central problem of contemporary life, which is the problem of retaining one’s identity in a world in which individuality becomes progressively more difficult to maintain. Proudhon was among the first anarchists to realize that there is a basic conflict between the interests of the individual and the mass. A man is an individual to the extent that he gives basic priority to the demands of his own nature regarding truth and social good. He may and should submerge his own private interests to those of his social group on occasion. But when he does so, he should not abandon his social principles, which are really the substance of his personal identity. When one abandons himself

totally to a group, he automatically becomes an integral part of the mass, thereby losing all claim to the distinctions which set him apart from others. And these distinctions invariably have to do with the demands of social life, for the individual is by nature a social being. Let us not troop off in pursuit of the mass, Proudhon urged, for the mass never knows where it is going. The anarchist society can only come about as the consequence of individual action. David Thoreau Wieck sums up the anarchist viewpoint in this regard when he writes: “When we say, people can become free only by will, only by acts of freedom, we are not juggling words. We mean that freedom is not merely the absence of restrictions—it is responsibility, choice, and the free assumption of social obligations.”¹³

What distinguishes anarchism from other ideologies and gives it prestige in the eyes of its advocates is the claim that only anarchism proposes to organize society without regard to the “crippling destructive principles of power, monopoly-property, and war”.¹⁴ Most revolutionary ideologies, according to the logic of this argument, have gone astray at the point at which they attempted to save society from destroying itself by giving certain individuals power in order to organize the “right kind” of institutions. But such thinking, according to the anarchist, is fatal to the revolutionary cause. As soon as leaders arise to lead the people, freedom has been lost. For bureaucracy demands that the will of individuals and spontaneous groups be subordinate to the will of the larger organization. Throughout history, revolution after revolution has demonstrated the failure of all schemes to save society by the introduction of formal organization and power.

This is one of the most widely misunderstood aspects of the entire anarchist frame of reference. Anarchism, as its proponents see it, does not advocate any particular form of organization for society but only an “idea”. And this idea is characterized by the conviction that the highest human value is freedom. No social action is legitimate in the eyes of the anarchist that does not aim at the greatest possible liberation of man’s creative potential. One becomes an anarchist at the point at which one accepts this idea, and dedicates himself to its realization. Anarchism, therefore, supports no utopian plans for the future. Nor is it capable of drawing a blueprint of the particular stages of social development which are to take place in the future. It rests its case on the fundamental assumption that a society of free men will spontaneously and invariably create a common life which reflects the anarchist value of freedom. To premeditate or plan the evolution of such a society is impossible. Liberal democracy has also argued that its ultimate goal is the attainment of human freedom. But there is an essential distinction between these two conceptions of freedom. The liberal democrat, convinced that the state is an institution capable of being utilized for the good of mankind, has subscribed to the view that the power of government is a positive factor in the attainment of human freedom. But the anarchist takes exactly the opposite view. For him, formal government and political power are predominantly negative and incapable of being employed for good ends. In the anarchist view of things, the

distinction between the democratic and authoritarian forms of the state is unreal. For both of these kinds of states are increasingly called upon to use coercion in one form or another for the realization of their ends. There is, of course, a difference in the degree to which each of them resorts to the use of force in the struggle for survival. But this quantitative difference is largely irrelevant in terms of individual freedom, for democratic states, when hard pressed, inevitably become authoritarian in their methods.

It is undoubtedly a large claim to assert, as George Woodcock does, that "anarchism is the only true doctrine of freedom".¹⁵ Yet the assertion cannot be dismissed lightly. For when anarchists such as Woodcock argue that anarchism has a special claim to freedom, they support their argument with impressive evidence drawn from the annals of contemporary social science. Consider, for example, Herbert Read's rejection of both communism and liberal democracy on the grounds that since they both resort to the delegation of authority and the imposition of formal coercive law for the maintenance of social order, they both ultimately lead toward totalitarianism.¹⁶ One may argue against this, of course—that the rule of law is superior to the rule of force as a means of settling differences of interest and opinion among men. But this argument begs the question. It is undoubtedly true that law is superior to force as a social technique. Yet law is not necessarily the best method available to men in the matter of establishing social order. "Law," as Bertrand Russell points out, "is too static, too much on the side of what is decaying, too little on the side of what is growing."¹⁷ Law, moreover, ultimately rests upon the principle that those who do not observe it will be coerced into doing so. So long as men voluntarily co-operate with the law, law is effective in maintaining freedom. But in those instances in which men are unable to bring themselves to obey the rules of political society, law quickly changes its nature and becomes sheer coercion and tyranny from the point of view of the individual who is being made to obey. This is why anarchists remain completely disenchanted with the idea of law.

Undoubtedly the primary reason why the anarchist idea has been so seriously distorted over the years is that it is essentially a revolutionary theory and therefore something to be feared by the general public. Like Marxism, it calls for the destruction of the state and an end to the domination of the worker and citizen by the politician and capitalist. Unlike the Bolsheviks, however, anarchists have no illusion that political power can be used for the attainment of revolutionary ends.¹⁸ One of the persistent problems faced by all movements of reform is the question of social guidance and direction. After a successful coup, in which power is wrested from the hands of a corrupt elite, the masses invariably turn to their own revolutionary leadership for guidance. Never before having experienced freedom, people do not know how to act when it is suddenly thrust upon them. And the leaders in turn are happy to take direction of the revolutionary fervour and direct it into prearranged channels, for the revolutionary leader, despite all his talk about the beauty and rightness of liberty, is always secretly fearful

that the masses may get out of hand and run amok. Consequently, the history of revolution is the story of one failure after another, so far as freedom is concerned. The answer to this problem, according to the anarchist approach, is to refuse to think of revolution as a political phenomenon. It is not possible to obtain social justice by replacing one kind of tyranny by another, as the Bolsheviks did in their revolution. A true social revolution, according to Proudhon, one of the most authoritative spokesmen for anarchist theory, must never be constructed on a foundation of hierarchy and leadership. "Radicals will have to recognize that only a decentralized society—both politically and economically—which has no need for leaders can be classless; that centralization invariably requires leaders, and therefore stratification."¹⁹ The task the anarchist has taken upon himself is to begin to lay the foundations of a decentralized, free society within the structure of the existing one. What anarchism urges is a complete rejection of the authoritarian principle which conditions people to look toward leaders for guidance. The natures of modern government and warfare being what they are, it is imperative that the main thrust of resistance to organizational life come from individuals who are capable of directing themselves. In this, anarchism reaches back to Thoreau, Ballou, Tucker, Emerson, Whitman, and a host of other poets and philosophers who have always stressed the importance of individual non-violent action against Leviathan.

Modern atomic war makes anarchists of us all, the anarchist argues. To a much greater extent than most people realize, anarchism and the peace movement are intricately bound up with each other within the context of American culture and have always influenced each other to new theoretical and tactical developments. It has been argued that the denominator common to all anarchists is that no anarchist can possibly engage himself in warfare or support a government that does so.²⁰ Some of the first Americans to clearly grasp the meaning of the idea of anarchy were members of the American peace movement who came to realize that modern warfare, from the French revolution on, bequeathed to every citizen the "right" to fight and die for the state.²¹ With the advent of atomic warfare, it became even more evident that the state, despite all the physical goods it may provide the individual citizen in time of peace, is blind to all moral and social values other than those necessary to its own survival when war becomes reality. As Randolph Bourne, one of America's most illustrious anarchists, has written, "War is the health of the state", by which he meant that the only way the state can justify its existence is to involve its citizens in the insanity of war. No anarchist, to the extent that he has remained true to his convictions, has ever admitted the legitimacy of war. Wilfredo Pareto expressed this same conclusion some thirty years earlier when he wrote to Benjamin Tucker, the American anarchist, that "the real opposition of system comes from those who believe that the happiness of a people does not consist in conquest, but in liberty, justice, and economic well-being".²²

Man is a social being who can only realize the fruition of his creative potential in association with his fellow beings. But unfortun-

ately, anarchists maintain, modern social developments have led to the atrophy of old "forms of community" in which man's social capacities found free and natural expression. No longer is it possible for the individual to be himself, trusting his fellow man and in turn being trustworthy to those to whom he owes social fidelity. Modern life, reflecting the influences of such unnatural phenomena as nationalism and capitalism, has caused an imbalance to take place in the delicate social mechanism which motivates the individual. It is from this fact that the irony of contemporary social life stems. The world has become insane because the individuals who make it up have been socially and spiritually alienated from one another. The individual is asked to take up arms against his fellow man and destroy him for the sake of establishing peace and brotherhood. Or the citizen is encouraged to join a political party and capture the power of government for the ostensible purpose of establishing social order. In each instance the individual is required to violate his natural social propensities always for the supposed good of all humanity. Having been conditioned by several centuries of this kind of chaotic reasoning, the human being, according to the anarchist, is incapable of solving his problems through the exercise of any conventional social solution such as parliamentary democracy. What modern society requires, according to the anarchist, is the far-reaching solution proposed by anarchism.

This is not to suggest that anarchism proposes an easy formula for the reform of society. To the contrary, anarchism refuses to even concern itself with the practicalities of reform. Many poorly informed observers condemn anarchism as a political theory because it fails to set forth a detailed plan for the implementation of the utopia it supposedly holds out to us. But anarchists refuse to acknowledge the validity of utopian thinking, nor will they accept the responsibility for providing society with a detailed scheme for its reformation. Anarchism, to be sure, is oriented toward the future and is wholly in accord with the notion that contemporary life is inadequate and unsatisfactory from the point of view of the individual. Yet anarchism as a social theory is valid in the eyes of the anarchist whether or not it ever produces any practical results. For anarchism directs itself at the individual and not at the mass. It is a "way of life" which makes it possible for the individual to transcend the physical restrictions and limitations he finds himself surrounded by. Anarchism may well be incapable of radically changing social life instantaneously and perfectly. But it does offer a way out for the sensitive individual who finds conventional social and moral standards superficial and unworkable. As every anarchist from William Godwin to Paul Goodman has realized, anarchism can only appeal to the mass of people after it has convinced the individuals of which society is composed, one by one.

Anarchists stand in basic disagreement with political scientists such as David Spitz who argue that one must either seize and wield political power in his own defence or risk being destroyed by it as a consequence of his inaction.²³ While it is true that political power will not evaporate overnight, it cannot be maintained that the choice before us is as one-

sided as Spitz makes it appear. Why can we not divide power by working toward its decentralization, with the view in mind of making it responsive to the individual human beings who are now controlled by it? Power, anarchists insist, remains political only so long as men persist in solving their social and economic problems through the expedient of coercion in the hands of the state. Where men voluntarily co-operate to solve their own problems by themselves, the nature of power is miraculously transformed.

Fundamental to the anarchist view is the conviction that it is political authority itself—the very foundation of the contemporary state—which causes the social damage we must contend with. Men have become so habituated to thinking of the state as essential to their well-being that they find themselves enslaved by it. Erich Fromm gives a succinct statement of this problem when he writes:

"The division between the community and the political state has led to the projection of all social feelings into the state, which thus becomes an idol, a power standing over and above man. Man submits to the state as the embodiment of his own social feelings, which he worships as power alienated from himself; in his private life as an individual he suffers from the isolation and aloneness which are the necessary result of this separation. The worship of the state can only disappear if man takes back the social powers into himself, and builds a community in which his social feelings are not something added to his private existence, but in which his private and social existence are one and the same."²⁴

The sentiments Fromm expresses here are in substantial agreement with Malatesta's assertion that "to abolish authority or government does not mean to destroy the individual or collective forces which are at work in society, or the influence men exert over one another."²⁵ Anarchists conceive of authority as a basically coercive instrument by which those who are successful in acquiring power force the mass of men to do their bidding. "The people", to be sure, are no longer compelled to slave in the erection of pyramids or other monuments to the conceit of their rulers, but they are forced to fight national wars and support economies which are not to their own best interests. And they do this not from free choice but because they have been conditioned to think of their duties to government in absolute terms. The state has maintained a monopoly of political power for so long that men can no longer imagine a situation other than one they are presently in. This conditioning starts in early childhood and continues throughout life, resulting in the totalitarianism we see everywhere about us today. But as both Fromm and Malatesta point out, social life begins at the point at which men, either individually or in groups, determine to go it on their own without the control exercised over them by their governments. To break with authority and assert one's human independence is a thoroughly anarchistic act. It is a declaration that one has confidence that he possesses the power and resources of his basic nature and that social life is possible without the "benevolent" hand of the state. Considered from the point of view of the individual, it is a

monumental decision involving a profound psychological transformation. No longer may the individual think of the state as a strong father figure which will lead him to security and ease. To the contrary, he must think of it as basically an obstacle in the path of his social development which must be removed before progress can begin.

There was a time when anarchists tended to visualize the act of revolution as a cataclysmic event which would sweep away the accumulated corruption of the ages and liberate the mass of working people immediately. But anarchists no longer think in such terms. The social revolution, all now generally agree, will not be something sudden and complete in itself but a long evolutionary process arising in the will of individual persons and spreading to others through the techniques of education and example. Basic to the social revolution is the transformation in attitude which will have to take place in the minds of individuals regarding the phenomenon of power. Where men tend today to think of power in terms of organized force and compulsion, they must come to think of it as an act of voluntary co-operation aimed toward social creativity. The concept of power, as Erich Fromm points out, has a double meaning.²⁶ On the one hand it signifies force and compulsion for the purposes of domination over others. On the other, power may be defined as the "potency" not to dominate others but to carry out socially creative acts through co-operation and accommodation. Power in this second sense is only possible in a society made up of healthy individuals who are capable of living without resort to force and external authority. Very few of us at present, of course, are equipped with the internal fortitude that the anarchist solution demands. But anarchism, since it does not depend upon the seizure of power, as other revolutionary theories do, can logically advocate a programme of social rebellion aimed toward the gradual but persistent transformation of the social conditions within society by genuine non-violent means. Denying that political power can ever be employed for human good, yet cognisant that the vast majority of men at any given time will be unable to see the logic of this argument, the anarchist, following Proudhon, puts himself in permanent opposition to injustice and inequality wherever and whenever he meets it. The anarchist, to be sure, is thus forever on the defensive and can hardly expect to win any decisive victories. Yet, unlike the liberal, who is apt to be thoroughly corrupted by the power he naively seeks to wield for good ends, the anarchist is not likely to follow the siren call to his own destruction. This is why anarchism sets no store whatever in utopianism, for it recognizes full well that human perfection is not likely to be ever attained on this earth. As Plato so well demonstrated at the very beginning of political philosophy, man's thirst for power and his subsequent corruption is a perennial problem born anew with each generation of men. It is as futile to hope for utopia as it is to accept the moral imperfection that presently characterizes mankind as permanent reality. Anarchists propose instead that we mount "a permanent protest against all forms of un-freedom and inequality, regardless of the slogans under which they are hiding their predatory

essence".²⁷ Such a course of action, to be sure, is likely to produce a long train of martyrs, and this is indeed the story of the anarchist idea. But it has also produced some of the most perceptive social critics that have graced the modern social scene.

To be an anarchist, then, is not to overturn the state by force and violence but to reject the use of force and violence as a means of maintaining social order. Thus conceived, the philosophy of anarchism becomes a rich and fertile area of imaginative social perception which political science has not yet discovered to any great extent. Those political scientists who dare to take seriously its admonitions concerning freedom and power may well reap a rich reward, saving us from the cul-de-sac in which we now seem to be caught.

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NOTES

- ¹William Ernest Hocking, *Man and the State* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1926), p. 93.
- ²Waldo R. Browne, *Man or the State* (New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1919), p. x.
- ³Bertrand de Jouvenel, *On Power* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1962), p. 99.
- ⁴A. Bellegarigue, "Anarchy Is Order", *Liberty*, XIII (December, 1897), 3.
- ⁵George Woodcock, *Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements* (Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1962), p. 28.
- ⁶Peter Kropotkin, *The State: Its Historic Role* (London: Freedom Press, 1946), p. 44.
- ⁷William A. Whittick, *Bombs: The Poetry and Philosophy of Anarchy* (Philadelphia, 1894), p. 186.
- ⁸Albert Weisbord, *The Conquest of Power*, I (New York: Covici Friede, Publishers, 1947), 235. For two widely divergent views of the essential nature of power and authority, compare E. V. Walter, "Power Civilization and the Psychology of Conscience", *American Political Science Review*, LIII (1959), 641-61, and Sebastian DeGrazia, "What Authority Is Not", *American Political Science Review*, LIII (1959), 321-31.
- ⁹Max Nomad, *Apostles of Revolution* (New York: Collier Books, 1961), p. 16.
- ¹⁰C. Northcote Parkinson, *The Evolution of Political Thought* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1958), p. 12.
- ¹¹For a suggestive view of this problem, see Colin Ward, "Anarchism as a Theory of Organization", *Anarchy*, LXII (April, 1966), 97-109.
- ¹²David Thoreau Wieck, "From Politics to Social Revolution", *Resistance*, XII (April, 1954), 3.
- ¹³D. T. Wieck, "Essentials of Anarchism", *Resistance*, XI (August, 1953), 7.
- ¹⁴*Ibid.*
- ¹⁵George Woodcock, *Anarchy or Chaos* (London: Freedom Press, 1942), p. 121.
- ¹⁶Herbert Read, "Neither Communism nor Liberalism", *Freedom*, VIII (January, 1947), 6.
- ¹⁷Bertrand Russell, "The State as Organized Power", in *Leviathan in Crisis*, ed. Waldo R. Browne (New York: Viking Press, 1947), p. 51.
- ¹⁸George Molnar, "Conflicting Strains in Anarchist Thought", *Anarchy*, IV (June, 1961), 121.
- ¹⁹H. R. Cantine, Jr., "State or Revolution", *Retort*, II (June, 1944), 47.

²⁰D. T. Wieck, "Anarchism", *Resistance*, VII (November-December, 1948), 3.

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²²Wilfredo Pareto, "Letters from Italy", *Liberty*, VI (September, 1888), 6.

²³David Spitz, *Democracy and the Challenge of Power* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), pp. 102-3.

²⁴Erich Fromm, *Escape from Freedom* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1951), p. 141.

²⁵Errico Malatesta, *Anarchy* (London: Freedom Press, 1942), p. 37.

²⁶Fromm, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

²⁷Nomad, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

OBSERVATIONS ON ANARCHY 108: BIG FLAME FLICKERING

I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE a few general comments about ANARCHY 108. It was a very fine issue, well written and much to the point.

My own school of anarchist thought is still that of anarcho-syndicalism, though in this country it fails to take its classical form. From this standpoint, I feel that many more such issues of ANARCHY would be of great value to the formation of libertarian patterns of thought generally. Worker control is very much the "in" issue at the moment, and as anarchists we have a good historical record here at least.

However, as many different conceptions of what worker control is, and how it could be achieved, exist as form the left political spectrum on all other issues. To a libertarian, with our concept of *direct* worker control and organisation, most other concepts are managerial in application.

Even the liberal social democrats now talk of participation.

As working people become less involved in production, and fewer people are involved in producing more, this issue becomes crucial. In years to come we will all become unproductive and have all our needs taken care of . . . ough. The class struggle exists; one need not advocate it, but are we forced to take part in it? The only way to end it is by the creation of a free society.

We must stress and develop our concept of worker control. One cannot just ignore the GEC/AEI affair, for whatever reasons it failed. The failure, for me, proves many things, but most of all, the bureaucratic and traditional approach of most concerned. From the top management to the shop floor, it was a mass acting-out. One can only hope the militants at least have learnt many lessons.

It may interest readers to know that a new rank-and-file paper called *The Big Flame* is about to be launched on Merseyside. For all I wish it luck, I fear that the editor will have a similar conception of the rank and file, etc., as the GEC Action Committee.

Liverpool 17

VINCENT JOHNSON

Anarchy is revolution

RICHARD SIMONSON

The Basis of the Revolution

KROPOTKIN in *Mutual Aid* has demonstrated that a fundamental basis of nature is co-operation. His thesis has been supported by evidence from the study of animal behaviour, which has been well substantiated by present day biologists and animal behaviourists, so that with regard to animals the evidence seems quite conclusive. He also has given examples of co-operation in man of all epochs.

Feeling that the evidence from animal behaviour and anthropology has been sufficiently discussed with regards to co-operation, I shall not discuss it here. Rather I wish to present evidence from another source of study—that of developmental psychology. While co-operation is not an innate trait of man, it is nevertheless developed in early childhood. Piaget states, "A third stage appears between 7 and 8, which we shall call the stage of incipient co-operation."¹ The third stage of child development is preceded by two earlier stages. "During the first stage rules are not yet coercive in character, either because they are purely motor, or else (at the beginning of the egocentric stage) because they are received, as it were, unconsciously, and as interesting examples rather than as obligatory realities. During the second stage (apogee of egocentric and first half of co-operating stage) rules are regarded as sacred and untouchable, emanating from adults and lasting forever. Every suggested alteration strikes the child as a transgression."² And the third stage, which is characterized by co-operation, is described as follows. "Finally, during the third stage, a rule is looked upon as a law due to mutual consent, which you must respect if you want to be loyal but which it is permissible to alter on the condition of enlisting general opinion on your side."³ Piaget presents considerable detail in describing this development of the child to the condition of being co-operative. And it is this condition that is considered to be the normal form of social equilibrium for as he states, "As soon as the individual escapes from the domination of age, he tends towards co-operation as the normal form of social equilibrium."⁴ But co-operation, whereby all those in the group can participate in the formulation of rules which are so necessary for social organization, implies equality and mutual respect for if equality and mutual respect does not exist then neither does the condition of co-operation.⁵

While I believe that co-operation has been demonstrated as an important and fundamental principle of nature, co-operation and mutual respect are not the only factors controlling man's behaviour; there also

exist those of constraint and unilateral respect. Even though co-operation and mutual respect are developed in all men those social relationships based on these factors have not been extended to all men by all men. Rather man has tended to form groups and to differentiate one group from another within the human species. It is within the given group that the factors of co-operation and mutual respect operate. With regard to what is considered the out group there may exist constraint and either mutual hostility or unilateral respect. This situation certainly exists between young children and their parents. This same social relationship also finds its expression in adult life. It is therefore on the basis of the formation of groups, which being perceived as different, make possible the corruption and oppression under which man groans.

Such differentiation only makes oppression possible; it does not make it inevitable. Contrary to George Bernard Shaw's belief⁶ Kropotkin did recognize the importance of man's internalization of cultural values for he states, "But side by side with these customs, necessary to the life of societies and the preservation of the race, other desires, other passions, and therefore other habits and customs, are evolved in human association. The desire to dominate others and impose one's own will upon them; the desire to seize upon the products of the labour of a neighbouring tribe; the desire to surround oneself with comforts without producing anything, while slaves provide their master with the means of procuring every sort of pleasure and luxury. . . ."⁷ To counteract these desires and passions those of co-operation, mutual aid, and mutual respect must be promoted. While moral teaching is of value in this aim, it will be quite ineffectual for the majority of men where it is not supported in the daily life and institutions of the society. Communities such as the kibbutzim in Israel, The Society of Brothers and Twin Oaks in the United States, provide not merely an example of an alternative way of life but, more important, provide institutions and societies where mutual aid and co-operation, which are so necessary to the life of societies and the preservation of the race, can be practised. Kropotkin has well recognized the importance of culture and the role institutions play in establishing and supporting the culture for it is only through ". . . the institution itself, acting in such a way as to make social acts a state of habit and instinct",⁸ that we are to be effectual.

Not only are such communities as are mentioned above and alternative institutions necessary for providing an environment in which that behaviour based on co-operation and mutual respect can be manifested and strengthened, but they are also necessary for providing the foundations of a new way of life, a new social order—an anarchic social organization—after the old order has crumbled and the revolution has taken place.

The Revolution

From the anarchist point of view all revolutions have been failures because they have resulted in the establishment of a government. They

have not brought about the anarchic social organization—a grouping of politically autonomous communes occupying an area of land not ruled over by a central authority. From the socialist point of view we have had some successful revolutions in the twentieth century.

The fundamental difference between the anarchist communists and the Marxists is the order in which events occur. Marxists argue that first we have the revolution and then the establishment of free associations and communes. The anarchist communists argue that first we must have the communes and free associations and then the revolution. Unless we have first provided the social organizations ready to take over the functions of government, the revolution can change the structure of the society but it cannot eliminate the government for some means must be available to change the structure and the only other means is the government. Once a government is established it acquires an interest in the maintenance of itself for its own sake and will not voluntarily dissolve itself. Thus the necessity and desirability of revolutions. Regardless of how well intentioned the revolutionaries are in their intentions to establish anarchy if by their acts another government is created we shall have to have another revolution to overthrow the new government and we can even go so far as to say ". . . outside of anarchism there is no such thing as revolution".⁹

It should be obvious from this last statement that revolution is not authoritarian. For if it were then anarchism would also be authoritarian—an idea which is obviously ludicrous. The revolution which has resulted in the establishment of anarchism has deprived no one of any freedom, not even the freedom to dominate one's fellow man, if such an appellation can be given to such an act. For those who prefer the authoritarian type of society let them go and establish their commune on such a basis. It is my belief that where the people are psychologically and physically free to choose, that is where they are possessed of the necessary information about the different communes and can move to any one of them, there will be few masters and fewer slaves. If the environment is so structured that the principle of mutual aid is not obstructed in its expression and practice it will be practised broadly.

NOTES

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²Jean Piaget: *ibid*, p. 36.

³Jean Piaget: *ibid*, p. 36.

⁴Jean Piaget: *ibid*, p. 117.

⁵Jean Piaget: *ibid*, p. 84 and p. 121.

⁶G. B. Shaw: "Impossibilities of Anarchism" in *Patterns of Anarchy*, p. 508 (Doubleday Anchor).

⁷Peter Kropotkin: "Law and Authority" in *Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets*, p. 203 (Benjamin Blom).

⁸Peter Kropotkin: "Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Ideal" in *Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets*, p. 139 (Benjamin Blom).

⁹Peter Kropotkin: "Revolutionary Government" in *Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets*, p. 242 (Benjamin Blom).

Programmed instruction and libertarian education

KEITH PATON

I SHALL FIRST DISPOSE of the bugbear of "impersonality" which supposedly attaches to programmed instruction and teaching machines. Apart from the fact that books and television are also "impersonal", the argument fails when one considers the real situation in schools and classrooms, not the warm human personalised atmosphere that is normally invoked against the cold "impersonal" machine. Writers like Willard Walter¹ and Jules Henry² have shown us how the conditions for the survival of the teaching role-system are a nightmarish insensitivity in which the teacher comes across only as his role, and not as a person at all. Furthermore, the rare or frequent deviations and friendliness are generally purely instrumental: the better to manipulate the children. This phoney freedom has been brilliantly analysed by Erich Fromm³ in his introduction to Neill's *Summerhill*, and by Marcuse⁴ with his concept of "repressive tolerance". Baran and Sweezy⁵ cite a case where a prominent American university had given a Ph.D. to the writer of a thesis on "The Use of Smiling and Laughter to Increase Teacher Effectiveness". If people are concerned to reify themselves to this extent, their jobs are better done by machines. Moreover, machines are incapable of subtly transmitting expectations of failure to children from "deprived" homes or to children labelled as unintelligent.⁶ Add to this the virtues of individual attention, constant interchange and the abolition of much time-consuming drudgery and the case for teaching machines would appear to be strong.

Ira S. Cohen⁷ notes that B. F. Skinner has consistently emphasised that teaching machines are merely supposed to do better what are already the goals of the teacher. In the first place there is constant interchange in a closed feedback system (unlike the open-ended systems such as a book or a television). In the second place there is the good teacher's insistence that a given (sic) point be understood before the pupil moves on. Thirdly there is the good teacher's presentation of just that material for which he knows the student is ready. Fourthly there is immediate correction or reward from the teacher after the pupil has tried. Teaching is thus a step-by-step imparting of cognitive material during which the (active, knowledgeable) teacher "shapes" or moulds the (reactive, ignorant) child to the required specifications. If this model of education is valid, if human beings are but clever pigeons,

then again there is no doubt that machines can achieve far greater results than conventional teaching. Give every child his Socrates and let the programme roll.

But that is just the point: Socrates didn't teach, he inquired. The Socratic method is *not* "answer-pulling", but its antithesis. Opposed to the Skinnerian reactive model of man, we need a model emphasising freedom and creativity. Once we are clear on our educational philosophy and psychology, we can look again to programmed instruction to see if it is compatible.

Man is an adaptive organism-in-environment. Because of this transaction, man is a learning animal. "Birds fly, fish swim; man thinks and learns. Therefore we do not need to 'motivate' children into learning, by wheedling, bribing or bullying. We do not need to keep picking away at their minds to make sure they are learning."⁸ He is constantly receiving feedback from the real world in the success or failure of his ventures on it. "To find out how reality works, he works on it."⁹ By remaining open to the real world, tolerating ambiguity and uncertainty, we can receive as much information about the real world as possible, and if we are healthy (not if we are extra-specially "creative") and can think with the style of a child, the solution works itself out in our subconscious because all the elements are there.¹⁰ If we impose a grid of words on the world, if we structure it according to a binary model, then we are artificially impoverishing the total information available to our problem-solving faculties. Indeed, if this is the case, logical analysis and manipulation is the only cognitive mode available to us: "reality" works mechanically because it is no longer reality. The reality we relate to as "practical-sensuous"¹¹ existences is infinitely more complex, and only intuitive or creative thought can hit on the solution. If we see the world wrong, making premature and rigid "closures" on problems, we are going to live in a state of permanent frustration—the world will be our prison because our dominant cognitive mode will screen out half the world. If our perceptions are less verbal and dichotomous, if our heads are healthy (creative reason), then we will be free to achieve our intentions in a world we are in intimate touch with.

We shall also be in touch with ourselves. Man is a growing animal. That is to say his transaction with the world is both natural and necessary. Harlow¹² has convincingly demonstrated the explorative, manipulative urges in monkeys by leaving puzzles in their cage. The monkeys would play for the sake of playing and their behaviour could not be understood in relation to rewards and punishments. Analogous to this *Funktionslust* (enjoyment in functioning, living as sufficient motive for life) is the child's curiosity. "The child is curious. He wants to make sense out of things, find out how things work, gain competence and control over himself and his environment, do what he sees other people doing. . . . He is experimental. He does not merely observe the world around him, but tastes it, touches it, lifts it, bends it, breaks it. To find out how reality works, he works on it. He is bold."¹³ Thus not only is this the way that children *do* learn, as was posited in

the previous paragraph, but this is the way they want to and can learn.

But this cuts right across the official notion of education: where do teachers come in? Holt again says, "The learner, young or old, is the best judge of what he should learn next. In our struggle to make sense out of life, the things we most need to learn are the things we most want to learn. Curiosity is hardly ever idle. When we learn this way we learn both rapidly and permanently."¹⁴ This insistence that all of us—not teachers or bosses or programmes—know best what we need to know, appears to run counter to common experience. "What about the child who wants to read *Beanos* all day long?"

Abraham Maslow¹⁵ notes that a monkey, left to itself in an environment with every sort of food available will "naturally" pick a balanced diet. So will children—that is *healthy* children who have been given freedom. The disjunction between what is of interest to the child and what is in his interests (as determined by the philosopher-kings) is central to behavioural psychology, mainstream programmed learning theory, and also to orthodox educational philosophy. "The child-centred teacher who believes in liberty has, therefore, like the parent, the moral problem of choosing between letting children pursue their interests, which may not be in their interest, and getting them to pursue what is in their interest."¹⁶

But again we seem to be flying in the face of common sense. "What about bed-time? Parents have to lay down the law on that at least." Not at all: the healthy child is sensitised to his own body, to his own needs for food, sleep, exercise, etc. By providing external authority, we teach him to become "out of touch" with himself. Bed-time is when Daddy says, or at such and such a clock-time, rather than when I yawn (biological time). It is obvious that machinery can be a powerful aid to false premises (e.g. alarm clocks). This is paralleled by the "proliferation of means" (Goodman) in cognitive education: machines to "motivate" children for example.

"But what about the unhealthy child—surely he does need to be told?" Not at all. Even the unhealthy child knows best in the sense that "the fool who persists in this folly will become wise".

Summerhill demonstrates how children who have missed out on play at their previous school, *need* to run wild for long periods before they are going to be interested or happy in finding out intellectually again. The regression therapy of R. D. Laing is also premised on the idea that if patients don't know best, then they still know best! They carry the record of the gaps in their own emotional development and this record is monitored by their deepest wishes.

Three advocates of programmed learning say this about personality: "(Such objectives) include such ideas as individuals being encouraged to develop their own interests and attitudes so that the ultimate product is an expression of a unique personality. But this is only within limits. The desire to be a fascist, a morbid interest in pornography, and similar bents which are not compatible with society's ideas of what men should be like, are not fostered but discouraged by our educational system."¹⁷ Evidently the desire to be a fascist needs no explaining—we are back

with our old friend original sin. The paucity of this sort of theorising would not concern us if there were no direct connections with intellectual education (and by extension, with programmed learning).

Neill has been much criticised for not emphasising cognitive training enough at Summerhill. (In practice of course he leaves the whole cognitive vs. emotional, work vs. play controversy to the children to decide: it's none of teacher's business to do the balancing.) However, Neill is surely correct when one begins to consider the centrality of the argument from cognitive superiority to orthodox education theory. The wedge of authoritarianism is often driven in by the tip of cognitive "requirements". The whole idea of "requirements" which the child does not feel as such is a massive alienation: with self-regulating individuals, the environment serves up notice of requirements to the body/mind, and the child responds because he wants to.

Skinner's whole system is based on the assumption that programmers know the end-goal specifications for development, either emotional or intellectual, whereas in reality each child carries his own programme with him and has his own unique and therefore *valuable* perceptions and insights on the world. Moreover, just as the self-regulated child is aware of his own physical and emotional needs or gaps, so he is aware of intellectual "gaps" and this awareness is the feeling of curiosity. If something doesn't make sense, we want it to. We have a vague knowledge of what it is we don't know. This interior prompting, like sleepiness or the urge to play, is weak and can easily be overridden by an adult telling the child what he thinks it ought to know. Mainstream programmed learning has based itself on the notion of a homogenous equally ignorant target population, the extent of whose ignorance is known exactly. In practice of course: "The human mind is a mystery. To a very large extent it will probably always be so. We will never get very far in education until we realize this, and give up the delusion that we can know, measure and control what goes on in the children's minds."¹⁸

But where "intrinsic programming"¹⁹ attempts to admit some differences in knowledge, the problem is made worse, not better. Suppose a computer could work out exactly what we didn't know and structured the programme to fit each one of us uniquely: we would free-wheel along to the vastest erudition. Until someone blew up the nearby power-station, that is. Our capacity to formulate questions to ourselves would have atrophied completely, precisely because the machine was so good at telling us what we needed to know. As John Holt says, you can tell an educated person not by how much he knows but by how he acts when he doesn't know.

The machine in capitalist society dominates the worker: dead labour weighs over living. The software of the programme represents an objectification of past creativity which can enslave and reduce the creativity of children and intellectual workers *unless* they are free to control their own lives, including the "mix" of work and play, computer-programme or teacher and peers, etc. Instead of being the milieu in which we are free to explore and create and change, our cultural tradi-

tion becomes instead a series of package programmes to be "got through"; the practical-sensuous world restructured to fit the crude binary logic of teacher or programme. Instead of centring himself, relaxed and open on the problem for-itself, the child anxiously orientates his thinking in relation to authority. Often, indeed, uses the greatest creative intelligence to devise self-limiting and self-defeating "producer strategies" (Holt): how to please teacher, how to get the programme finished.

Central also to the mainstream of programmed instruction is the idea of control, making sure the child travels on predetermined cognitive paths laid according to what seems "logical" to the teacher. (Branching programmes are fundamentally no different.) Concentration on factual content hides the relationship between facts, the structures of the subject matter, knowledge of which is *understanding*. Unless understanding is present, transfer will be poor, but to make the structures themselves items of knowledge on a par with content-facts is to transmit a totally false ideology of Objective or "Third-Person" (Alasdair MacIntyre) Truth. In addition to imparting habits of unquestioning reactive obedience to authority, it is likely that most programmes engender rigid cognitive modes. It therefore comes as no surprise to learn of a study²⁰ where dogmatism and achievement on a programme were correlated +.53, despite the normal inverse correlation between authoritarianism and general achievement. (It is also interesting to note that two workers²¹ who have studied what they call "normative feedback" (consensus of impressions among factory inspectors) in the absence of available "objective binary criteria" (a precision machine to measure degree of smoothness) have discovered that the "experts" were no better at judging metal surfaces than naïve subjects. And where is our profile-meter when it comes to measuring people?)

Nevertheless, it would be foolish to condemn all programmed instruction. It has its A. S. Neills and its Montessoris too. I shall now discuss approaches and applications that seem to me compatible with a healthy meaning of the word "education".

A key paper is that of R. F. Mager in 1961.²² He observed that what seems a logical way of arranging material to the teacher, may be baffling to a pupil with his own unique configurations of insight and ignorance, his own schemes for organising material into meaning. "Although there are several schemes by which sequencing (of presentation of 'frames') can be accomplished, and although it is generally agreed that an effective sequence is one which is meaningful to the learner, the information sequence to be assimilated by the learner is traditionally dictated entirely by the instructor or programmer. . . . To obtain learner-generated sequences, a procedure was developed which gave the learner control over a curriculum of instruction."

The instructor explained to each pupil that he would try to act purely as a responsive mechanism to the pupil's questions (about electronics). Of six pupils, all approached the subject in different ways (once they had got over their amazement at really being in charge).

Very often the instructor could not understand the reasons lying behind the questions and order of questions of the pupil: how much more difficult therefore for instructees to follow the "logical" arrangement of someone else when they are not experts in the subject matter! The study also suggested that the learner's motivation increased in proportion to his control over the material to be learnt. "Although, under continuous threat of examinations, we can ensure that *content* will be learned, we undoubtedly extinguish content-approaching behaviour at the same time."

In a later experiment²³ Mager and McCann remodelled a traditional expert-taught six months' course in engineering. They assumed that all their pupils knew something of the material already and were capable of deciding how to improve their knowledge to coincide with a paper specifying what the course ought to have given them by the end. By leaving the pupils to ask the questions they achieved the following results:

- (1) reduced six months' course to between eight and ten weeks;
- (2) better quality engineers, more confident in tackling problems;
- (3) less time taken by the "experts" in lecturing and tutoring the trainees;
- (4) every student wanted to know different things and in different order within the overall objective of becoming better engineers.

In another paper²⁴ Mager describes how he discovered how his own programming had been getting in the way of his learners. He relates the inability of his colleagues to believe that his students would be able to ask the "right" questions. Kay, Dodd and Sime²⁵ voice the same doubts: "Sometimes (the student) will be unable to discern his needs: sometimes he will be unable to ask the questions which will satisfy them." The vast theoretical divide stemming from this sort of issue has already been indicated. Mager's position is tentative but clear: "Rather than research from the strangling assumption that the instructor is necessary, I feel we could learn more by assuming that he is *not* necessary until proven otherwise." He points to studies where professors have only lectured to half the class and left the other half to educate themselves. However, even if self-instruction in groups should be proved deficient in some respects, that does not throw us into the camp of the teachers. Learner-controlled instruction with the "instructor" as an efficient responsive system refraining from imposing his own closures and formulations, has still to be discredited. The "instructor" will find (if he can maintain this role of friend and information-store) how mismatched he is to the assumptions and schemas of the learner. The medium is the message, and formulating questions and then searching for information that will enable us to ask more and more advanced or more relevant questions: this process is at the heart of true education.

Mager's approach in programming is thus parallel to self-directive therapy and self-regulative education. His descriptions of his electronics course somewhat resemble Simon Stuart's English lessons described in his book *Say*. Vincent Cambell suggests²⁶ that self-directive learning becomes

more appropriate compared with conventional programmes as the subject programmed requires more and more understanding: it will prove superior to conventional programmes in the ease of transfer of the understanding gained. Moreover, "the most promising single result . . . was the beneficial effect of a week of practice in self-direction during which critical self-appraisal of study tactics was encouraged. Breaking the student's passive set 'to be taught' seemed to be the crucial factor in the practice sessions. . . . If crudely improved self-direction can equal or excel programmer-controlled instruction in a week or two, how much greater might be the gain over months and years of learner-controlled instruction?"

R. E. Grubb reports²⁷ a course in learner-controlled statistics. He cites Bruner²⁸ in arguing that the teaching of the structure of subject matter is every bit as important as teaching its content. In most programmed instruction the learner cannot see the course for the frames: how would it be to provide a system of maps of the structure of a discipline? Aided by a computer a student could "zoom in" on subjects and topics that interested him, skipping and revising according to his purposes, learning inductively or deductively as suited him best, making connections across on the basis of concrete topic rather than following some analytic tree to a high level of abstraction and down again, making his own way through the subject until grasping the whole coherently according to the synthesis of the map or through a personally desired schema.

Self-directed programmes would need computer memories to record the questions most frequently asked by the student, and modules prepared accordingly. The instructor's job would be to answer or to explore in common with the student, any questions of a divergent and original kind. Assuming a friendly instructor, there would thus be a "reward" for relevant original questions built into the programme.

Medical diagnostics is the sort of task which could be taught by a kind of logical game with the computer. The computer could present an initial list of symptoms and the learner could diagnose or ask questions of the "patient". The "patient" would also be the diagnostician however, since the computer could be programmed to detect when the student wasn't using all his information, or had guessed.

Obviously such a training would need to be supplemented by enough non-verbal "gestalt" perception of the real patients, or else the medical profession would stay rutted in its own verbal categories, thus reducing the chances of creative transcending of current symptomatological formulations. (New creation can only come from receiving as many clues from the real world as possible. Otherwise the labelling process takes over and leads to a progressive information entropy.)

A second general caveat is the necessity for impressing on the student the essential contingency of programmed instruction: somebody made it and he could have made it differently. The best way to teach this is to create opportunities for students to create their own programmes for each other or for younger brothers and sisters.

Crutchfield and Covington²⁹ are concerned with the dangers of

homogenisation of content and ways of thinking among users of conventional programmes. "The diversity of ways of thinking in the group is one of the crucial conditions favouring originality of thought in the individual." They add, "The very characteristics of a good programme that makes for smooth spoon-fed learning may militate against creative stimulation of the individual." Identifying creativity with a Master Thinking Skill of deploying various sub-skills such as "original flow", testing against reality, intuition and analysis, they go on to recommend "repeated practice at making creative responses directly within the context of meaningful creative tasks". This "creative-acts-in-miniature" approach requires frames with more time, bigger steps between frames, and the encouragement of diversity of response provided the original responses are still intrinsically disciplined, i.e. by the student's desire to solve the problem and produce ideas relatable to that end. Accordingly they devised a fascinating series of detective-stories-cum-programmes for eleven-year-olds in which the "locus of cognitive initiative" remains always with the learner. The learner identifies with either Jim or Lila, who have an uncle who is an amateur detective. Each lesson poses a mystery and is interrupted by frames during which the child is required to restate the problem and ask questions. Feedback comes from the (unusually creative) Jim and Lila and from the uncle who is always seeing new clues. A test of creativity involving problem-solving (how could a man in a pit get out?) and divergence (unusual uses for a brick, new adaptations for toys, etc.) was given to the experimental group of ninety and to a control group who had been familiarised with the stories to a small extent. The results indicated a considerable gain in *both* types of creativity among the experimental group. In a modified repeat experiment it was found that the acceleration in ability of the programme users was rapid, i.e. after only very modest instruction. Crutchfield and Covington take this as evidence against the idea that they have somehow instilled creativity or "trained" it in the children concerned. Rather, they consider that they are *sensitizing* the child to *skills he already possesses*, and activating their use.

Shackel and Lawrence describe³⁰ the tendency of conventional programmes to compel all students "to travel predetermined cognitive paths, all leading to the same terminus". Is it possible to ally the hopeful aspects of programmed instruction (self-pacing, self-directing) with open-ended programmes designed to encourage creativity? Their programme incorporated the following exercises: Supposing, riddles, rhymes, rhythms, commonplace things, opposites, likenesses, rearranging, similes, humour and the five senses. They found that the fluency and elaborative abilities of their experimental children improved markedly, as well as their flexibility and originality. Interestingly there was carry-over to figural abilities despite the verbal (and possibly shallow?) nature of the exercises in the programme.

The high degree of significance of the results cannot be argued away, but in general programmes designed to "teach creativity" seem to be examples of what Goodman calls "proliferation of means". If the children had learned freely and creatively from entry into school

(as they had done until school age) would not a programme "to improve creativity" have been irritatingly trivial and superfluous? On the other hand, if the creativity programmes are fun, like the detective stories, then that is a different matter, and anyway it is up to free children to judge programmes and to do what they enjoy.

It is important to emphasise the possibility of integrating many different activities into a programme. Tucker and Hartley³¹ devised a successful programme to teach line symmetry, which involved primary children in discussion, collection of objects, talking with the teacher, observing nature, cutting and folding paper, etc. In addition the programme involved a break with the typically Skinnerian assumption of learning as an individual—talk and sociability must interfere with the Stimulus-Response bonds! Instead it is now generally recognised that learning in groups and pairs can be just as effective, if not more so, since it allows for more sources of correction and originality. In this study, Tucker and Hartley found that where children of mixed ability were paired, significant levelling-up, not levelling-down, resulted.

To summarise: the question of the "impersonality" of the programmes can be seen to be irrelevant. Behavioural assumptions behind teaching and with them mainstream programmed instruction, can be rejected. But there are indications, especially deriving from the work of Mager, that programmed instruction may be a valuable aid in a libertarian education. "What we need to do, and all we need to do, is bring as much of the world as we can into the school and classroom, give children as much help and guidance as they need and ask for; listen respectfully when they feel like talking; and then get out of the way. We can trust them to do the rest."³² Computers, teaching machines and various kinds of programmed materials can all be brought into the classroom. The real test is whether free and healthy children enjoy them and profit from their use.

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A growing number of principals, teachers and higher educational administrators I have talked to believe that the most basic causes of the crisis are outmoded teaching methods and programmes. And student boycotts are the most effective tool to force reforms.

As Mr. Bardyl Tirana, one of the members of the local school board, put it to me: "Students reach a point of maturity at a much earlier age today and know that their lives are their own. They do not accept as gospel what is offered to them by the school administration. The only body who can make the school system work is a combination of parents, of teachers and of students." A few Washington high schools have begun to experiment with this approach.

—HENRY BRANDON: "Anarchy Threatens America's High Schools", *Sunday Times*, 15 February, 1970

OBSERVATIONS ON ANARCHY 107: GOODMAN ON EDUCATION

IS PAUL GOODMAN AN ANARCHIST or an advanced liberal? He says that when he addresses student audiences he is met with sullen silence. I am not surprised!

First of all it is the job of anarchists in the student movement not to campaign for increased entry into *this* society but to smash *this* society and to construct another. This society is a network of power structures in which a few people dominate the rest. Education is no exception. Before any really *fundamental* change can take place the educational power structure must be smashed. This society cannot tolerate fundamental changes in the educational system owing to the

central role it plays in indoctrination and providing technical and intellectual labour. If the aim is to smash this society then why is confronting it hostilely a waste of time? This society is steadily disintegrating and the process of disintegration is fast outpacing Paul Goodman's naive reformism.

I agree with the contention that experience is the best way to learn and that isolation from society is a bad thing. But that is what Paul Goodman is proposing when he talks about a protective environment and he still envisages domination by teachers. I feel that children have no need to be protected from an anarchist society since, I hope, anarchist society will embody the principles of personal freedom within an organic community structure.

In an anarchist society schools as such will not exist. This is not to say that centres of information, or information designed for the young, will not exist but children will not be isolated in a supposedly protective environment. Children, left to themselves, are curious, and will ferret out information about things that interest them. All we have to do is to grant them access to information and, above all, experience. Teachers will exist, since children are good at finding out the people who can explain things to them, but teaching will be nothing like it is today. It seems to me that what children need will be play and information environments which they can use as they please and which will be part of the community. Access to information could be made available to all much in the way public libraries operate today.

Epsom

GEOFF WRIGHT

* * *

BRILLIANT AND DEEPLY RADICAL essay on education by Paul Goodman in ANARCHY 107. Children should learn from the community: schools are false. Compulsory reading.

SYNIC, No. 14, February 1970

OBSERVATIONS ON ANARCHY 108: REMEMBERING MARTIN SMALL

I SHOULD LIKE TO ADD a few words to Colin Ward's memoir of Martin Small. I first met him after he had temporarily left Oxford, in 1962. I had just got married, and during that terrible winter of 1962-1963 we were living in a damp little flat in South Hampstead, spending most of our spare time in constant activity in the Committee of 100, and utterly exhausted from one day to the next. Late one night a person we didn't know knocked at the door. That was common enough, but this was no common person; it was a young man with very long black hair (when even young men's hair was still short), huge bright eyes, and a soft ceaseless voice. He was that rare and embarrassing thing, a beautiful man. He introduced himself by way of the Committee of 100 and ANARCHY as Martin Small, and it turned out that he was living quite near us.

He talked for hours that night, and on several other nights when he arrived, always very late, always unexpected but always welcome,

always pouring out ideas, names, books, in an undisciplined and uncritical but fascinating and stimulating stream. I immediately thought, and seven years later I still think, that he was thoroughly medieval: he was a wandering scholar, obsessed with abstractions, unable to stop reading and talking and writing, unconcerned by mere secular things such as time, money, comfort, and so on, so much interested in the past and the future that he hardly seemed to be aware of the present.

From time to time he would send me copies of the work he was doing—usually an enormous exegesis of some obscure apocalyptic or episcopal figure (I particularly remember Ponet's *Short Treatise of Politic Power*, many of Winstanley's pamphlets, most of Haller's *Tracts on Liberty*), works which reminded me of nothing more than the scholastic writers of the Middle Ages. This impression was reinforced when he retired to a monastery in Scotland in the spring of 1963, to take part in, as he put it in a letter, "the sectarian process (pre-Toynbee) of withdrawal and return with new light I hope on the better world which we can make and enjoy". From time to time after that he would send postcards instead, inscribed in italic handwriting with cryptic political-theological reflections—ending in one instance, "Yrs. on the road to Utopia."

We naturally saw less of him when he had moved away, but I remember bumping into him on the 1965 Easter March, his hair cut sadly short (only, he assured me, to get a job packing toys at Galts); and later I often came across him in the British Museum Reading Room when he was working at the Pizza Express. He introduced me to that excellent place, and I remember him cooking there with an open copy of some book beside him (he got very excited one busy evening about a new edition of Samuel Bamford's *Passages in the Life of a Radical*—or was it *The Autobiography of Joseph Arch*; or perhaps both, on two busy evenings?). We had profound disagreements about most things—whether they were superficial matters such as his admiration of the novels of William Godwin or his interpretation of those of William Golding, or more fundamental ones concerning the meaning of anarchism, but he was one of those people who are quite unaffected by mere disagreement, and there was always a warm welcome whenever and wherever I saw him—and once the gift of a huge loaf of garlic bread handed to me in the Reading Room, still steaming from the oven and filling the austere dome with a most unscholarly odour. Some time later I met him again when he was teaching at Elliott School, showing a justifiable pride in the genuinely remarkable work he had got his pupils to do; and I would agree with Colin Ward that teaching was perhaps his true vocation—especially the teaching of children, who were more likely to rise to his enthusiasm.

It was soon after this that his single contribution was published in the *Times Literary Supplement*, and in view of Colin Ward's brief parenthesis I should like to explain the circumstances a little more fully. Martin Small had often tried to write for the *TLS*, but anyone who knows it and also knows his work in ANARCHY and FREEDOM will realise

that his normal way of expressing himself was quite inappropriate for its terse and impersonal columns; and he had great difficulty in adapting his style accordingly. The article in question was "hacked about for publication" because it was not the article he had been asked for. Instead of the "review of Burton R. Pollin's *Godwin Criticism*" which Colin Ward mentions and which Martin Small had been invited to write, it was a massive discussion of the whole Godwin question, getting rid of the book at a very early stage. I was the member of the *TLS* editorial staff who was given the delicate task of extracting from this 6,000-word essay the 1,200-word review that was wanted; it is not quite true that we "simply printed the first three pages of his sixteen-page typescript"—only two pages actually dealt with the book, and it was necessary to rescue them and whatever introductory material was interesting and relevant, and make the result look like a complete article. It was a near thing whether the piece appeared at all, but it did—on March 20, 1969—and I think the operation was quite successful.

I last saw Martin at Oxford, during the Ruskin College History Workshop in November 1969, a couple of weeks away from death but still full of mental fight, much appreciating Stanley Shipley's pioneering account of the origins of the English anarchist movement, arguing about William Godwin as always, and also about his new interest, George Eliot, still very much the wandering scholar, surrounded by friends and full of talk, a living example of what places like Oxford were meant to be and could be yet—living, alas, no longer. I think we should remember people like Martin Small. The movement we share with him tends to be remembered only in terms of printed publications, dramatic events, news items, conflicts and tendencies. It is important to remember that it is more than anything else the people like Martin who give it exactly those qualities which keep it alive but which cannot be captured in words.

Harrow

N.W.

* * *

I HAD KNOWN since August that Martin had no hope of recovery: but in his presence it was hard to believe—his mind was so alive—and so dissimulation was easy. Yet in the end I think I was glad that his dying was not prolonged any further: I prefer to remember him as the sturdy, bare-footed, brown-skinned student with a perpetual boyish smile. I was very glad to read your tribute to him. It seemed to me to sum up the essence of the man perfectly. It made me proud to have known him; and aware afresh of how much his friends have lost by his death.

Chichester

N.G.

ANARCHY 100: A JAPANESE EDITION

ANARCHY 100, which consisted of a new introduction to anarchism under the title "*About Anarchism*", specially written by Nicolas Walter, sold out immediately after publication in June 1969. It was reprinted as a pamphlet with the same title in July 1969, and this has also sold well (copies are still available from the Freedom Press).

Since then *About Anarchism* has been translated into several languages. A Yiddish translation with the title "*Vegn Anarchizm*" has been serialised since August 1969 in the Argentine periodical *Dos Fraye Vort*. A French translation with the title "*Pour l'Anarchisme*" was published in October 1969 as the first pamphlet of the *Centre International de Recherches sur l'Anarchisme* in Switzerland, and simultaneously as a double issue of the French periodical *Anarchisme et Non-Violence* (Nos. 18/19); this translation has been serialised since February 1970 in the French periodical *Le Combat Syndicaliste*. An Italian translation with the title "*Dell'Anarchismo*" has been serialised since October 1969 in the American periodical *L'Adunata dei Refrattari*, and since December 1969 in the Italian periodical *L'Internazionale*. A Japanese translation is now in course of preparation, with the following preface: *About Anarchism* was written for the hundredth issue of the British monthly paper ANARCHY (June 1969), and it was of course mainly intended for readers in the British anarchist movement. But it was deliberately expressed in general terms and not restricted to a purely British or even a purely anarchist context. It has therefore been found suitable for circulation in several places outside Britain and in several languages other than English; within a year of publication it has been distributed in Western Europe, North and South America, and Australia, and it has been translated into French, Italian and Yiddish. But the present edition is the first in a non-European language for readers outside the European imperialist zone. This is a great honour for me, and I hope that despite the considerable geographical and cultural distance between us my Japanese readers will find something useful in my work.

It may be worth defining my position in the light of what I understand to be the situation of the Japanese anarchist movement. I do not think of anarchism as an idea which is limited in either space or time—as a purely European phenomenon which has existed for only one century. On the contrary, I think of it as a universal human phenomenon which has appeared throughout history wherever and whenever people have rebelled against oppression without trying to replace it with a new oppression. If this idea has developed into a specific ideology in modern Europe, that is a matter of historical accident resulting from particular economic, social and political circumstances. I believe that anarchism, as expressed in my pamphlet, is an idea of universal application with suitable adaptation to local conditions.

I see the particular value of anarchism in any conditions in its insistence that freedom is the highest political end, and that true freedom involves equality, just as true equality involves freedom—freedom *is* equality; and in its realisation that this end does not justify

any means, because means determine ends—means *are* ends. What this comes to in practice is that anarchists must take care not to be either too moderate or too extreme in two important ways. On one hand, we must avoid extreme tolerance or extreme intolerance; and on the other hand, we must avoid extreme action or extreme inaction.

Thus it is dangerous for anarchists to imagine that they can work closely with other groups—such as communists or social-democrats or liberals or pacifists—without compromising their principles; but at the same time it is dangerous for them to react against this danger by relapsing into a sectarianism in which they work with no one and therefore achieve nothing. Similarly, it is dangerous for anarchists to imagine that they can use any methods—such as deceit, infiltration, manipulation, assassination, terrorism—without betraying their principles again; but at the same time it is dangerous for them to react against this danger by relapsing into a quietism in which they use no methods and therefore do nothing.

So anarchism, which is generally thought of as an extreme faith, is in fact a faith of moderation—the anarchist wants his freedom, but not at the cost of other people's freedom. It is this moderation which causes such fear among all those extremists who want to keep mankind divided into masters and slaves, and which also causes such hatred among both the masters and the slaves. Anarchists have bitter experience of the results of this fear and this hatred—in Japan in 1911 and 1923,* as in so many countries at so many times. The only way to make this fear come true and to make this hatred fade away is to maintain our anarchist principles in everything we do and to repeat the anarchist message over and over again until it is properly understood. That is what I have tried to do in this pamphlet.

May 1970

NICOLAS WALTER.

*In January 1911 the anarchist leader Kotoku Shusui and several of his comrades were executed for an alleged plot against the Emperor. In September 1923 the anarchist leader Osugi Sakae and some of his relatives were murdered by soldiers in the upheaval following the great earthquake, and ten anarcho-syndicalist leaders were murdered by police a little later. This marked the violent ending of the anarchist influence in the Japanese left, which had been considerable for about fifteen years.—Ed.

Anarchy II2 is on SOUTHERN AFRICA

Anarchy II3 is on WOMEN IN PRISON
