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on Marcuse

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on riding with

the hounds

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Anarchy II4

Emma Goldman,

Alexander

Berkman,

and the dream

we hark back to ...

RICHARD DRINNON

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Two commemorations

RICHARD DRINNON

1. Emma Goldman, Alexander Berkman, and the dream we hark back to . . .

IN 1961 I FINISHED THE BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY at the end of my book *Rebel in Paradise* with a quotation from Evelyn Scott. In a letter dated February 14, 1936, Miss Scott had written to Emma Goldman that she regarded her as the only one who had been active in the United States without being committed to an unjust present or won over to the defeat of personal liberty: "You were the only one there, I often feel, who had a third attitude and the power of personality to carry it into activities not representable in art. But you to me are the future they will, paradoxically, hark back to in time." In justice, the usually perceptive novelist should have noted that Alexander Berkman was also committed to this third attitude—like so many of Emma's friends, Miss Scott seemingly saw Berkman as hardly more than an adjunct in the activities of his more ebullient comrade.

But what bothered me most in the half-dozen years I thought about the statement, off and on, before using it, was its confident tone: How could anyone have been so sure we would hark back to Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman? Miss Scott was writing in a decade which prided itself on its acceptance of the corporate world, of social realism, of a forced choice, so the argument went on the left, between fascist or communist managers. John Chamberlain was already writing their epitaph in his *Farewell to Reform* (John Day, 1932) when he remarked that "anarchism has gone its way into the past; the Emma Goldmans—atomic, incapable of organization towards definite

RICHARD DRINNON gave this address at a memorial luncheon for Alexander Berkman (1870-1936) and Emma Goldman (1869-1940). The article on the same theme which follows it was written as an introduction to the new edition of Emma Goldman's Anarchism and other essays, just published in the United States by Dover Publications as one of their series of reprints of anarchist classics.

ends—make no sense in a corporate world. If anarchism has any future, it is far beyond the horizon, and beyond the Communist horizon, once the state has ‘withered’ away as a coercive instrumentality.” History was being made. Chamberlain, E. H. Carr, and others showed, not by individuals but by the big battalions which were pushed along their determined paths by integral nationalism and global economic systems. I confess that, writing two decades later, at a time of the loyalty mania and McCarthy, the lonely crowd and the organizational man, of students and faculty members who seemed to believe they had been born into a prefabricated universe even less open to change than the suburban split-level fulfillment which awaited them—writing then I could only marvel at Miss Scott’s certainty. I quoted her more by way of indicating what should rather than would happen.

Yet today the Emma Goldmans and Alexander Berkman have somehow started making sense to increasing numbers of people. One index is the publishers’ surge of interest in them. Greenwood has recently reprinted their magazines, *Mother Earth* and *Blast*, making them available to libraries across the country. After a decade of fruitlessly urging editors to re-do Berkman’s *Prison Memoirs*, I recently bemusedly watched several try to outprint each other to this neglected classic. Dover has just brought out a new edition of Emma’s *Anarchism and Other Essays*. The other day the director of a university press called with a proposal to republish her *Living My Life* in soft cover—he even inquired about the advisability or re-issuing her dated *Social Significance of the Modern Drama*.^{*} A paperback edition of my biography will be brought out by Beacon Press this fall. And Alix Shulman has written, with both the directness and simplicity due her readers and the respect due the complexities of her subject, a children’s biography of Emma which Thomas Y. Crowell will soon publish.

These undertakings, as you know, reflect the general upsurge of interest in anarchism. Recent histories include George Woodcock’s *Anarchism* (Meridian, 1962), James Joll’s *The Anarchists* (Dell, 1964), Corinne Jacker’s *The Black Flag of Anarchism* (Scribner’s, 1968), and Daniel Guérin’s short, simple, and good *L’Anarchisme* (Paris: NRF-Gallimard, 1965). Guérin’s *Ni dieu ni maître* (Paris: Editions de Delphes, 1965) is the best of the recent anthologies. Two others, *The Anarchists* (Dell, 1964), edited by Irving L. Horowitz, and *Patterns of Anarchy* (Anchor, 1966), edited by Leonard Krimmerman and Lewis Perry, have made anarchist writings easily accessible on the campuses. And just the other day Heath sent a copy of *American Radical Thought* (1970), edited by Henry J. Silverman, which contains sensible selections from the works of Emma, Berkman, and a line of other libertarians extending from the American Revolution to the present.

Since my present research interests lie elsewhere, I can safely

^{*}Since this was written, I chanced to learn from Arthur Leonard Ross, Emma’s old friend, that an Apollo edition of *My Disillusionment in Russia* has just come out.

observe that the quality of all this scholarly activity is, on the whole, remarkably high. Some of the most acute, inquiring minds in the academy have turned their attention to anarchism. Noam Chomsky’s concern with the anarchist role in the Spanish Revolution, discussed in his *American Power and the New Mandarins* (Vintage, 1969), is a case in point. Paul Avrich’s study of *The Russian Anarchists* (Princeton, 1967) and his just published *Kronstadt 1921* (Princeton, 1970) are others. Theodore Roszak’s *Counter Culture* (Anchor, 1969) is yet another.

All of these editors and scholars are responding in some measure, of course, to recent upheavals. The liberation movements of women, students, Reds and Blacks, of resistance movement on all levels, have provided readers to whom Emma, Berkman, and their comrades can speak directly. The first hard evidence I had that they sometimes do came in the form of a clipping an editor sent me from the now defunct New York *World Journal Tribune*, dated November 13, 1966. The article announced “CANADA OPEN AS HAVEN FOR DRAFT DODGERS” and the accompanying photograph showed “An Expatriate in Toronto Reading *Rebel in Paradise*”, with the book held in front of his face to conceal his identity. Emma might have objected to the young man hiding behind her—or, more accurately, behind my depiction of her—but she certainly had something to say out of her experiences to him and to the tens of thousands of other war opponents who have followed him into exile, prison, the underground, or continued resistance in the streets.

II

The timeliness of Emma and Berkman is beyond serious question. A thirteen-year-old boy, for instance, one of the contributors to a volume of essays entitled *Growing Up Radical* (Random, 1970) asserts as a truism that “the United States enslaves, oppresses, silences, and murders. If we dare to question, or worse, to protest, our leaders are squashed. . . .” The indictment might have come directly from the pages of the *Blast*, except Berkman would have referred to *spokesmen* rather than *leaders*. Or take this assessment of the “woman question”:

Female emancipation has not yet come. The feminists’ heart-breaking struggle and incipient revolution have been aborted by male society with help from acquiescing female[s]. . . . It is the obligation of each of us to make human equality a reality, starting in our own lives.

Does this sound like a quotation from Emma’s lecture on “The Tragedy of Woman’s Emancipation”? It could be, for there are directly parallel passages there, but it is from an article written a half century later by a contemporary fighter for woman’s freedom (Betty Roszak, *Liberation*, December 1966, pp. 30-31). In its distrust of power and leaders, emphasis on spontaneity, frank delight in sex, drive to organize from the bottom up, and commitment to universal participation in decision-making, the early Students for a Democratic Society obviously might have drawn on the experience of the two earlier rebels. SDS, as you know, has since split and slipped into several

ideological strait-jackets rather pathetically reminiscent of the orthodox Old Left. But consider the following call to action:

Never before in our generation's history has the time been so right for revolution. Radical movements throughout the world are engaged in active rebellion against the bastions of tyranny . . . the old world is perishing and in its place a new world of promising character is emerging. . . . We . . . recognize and encourage this trend toward world revolution. We eagerly extend the hand of friendship and aid to those actively and sincerely participating in the struggle for human emancipation from all forms of oppression.

I assume you can detect parallels here with some of the more eschatological appeals of Emma and Berkman. But would you guess the call came from the Weathermen, Revolutionary Youth Movement I, or Revolutionary Youth Movement II? It is in fact the introductory paragraph of the 1969 "Tranquil" Statement of the Anarchist Caucus within the—Young Americans For Freedom!

The relevance of Emma and Berkman to recent movements is not limited to the two extremes of the American political spectrum. It is world-wide. Here two illustrations from Western Europe will have to do. Denounced as a "German anarchist" by Georges Marchais of the French Communist Party, Daniel Cohn-Bendit—with his brother Gabriel—has written a book with the suggestive title *Obsolete Communism: The Left-Wing Alternative* (McGraw-Hill, 1969). In it he dispenses with the need for "leaders", discusses the repressive nature of all hierarchies, attacks *la maladie sénile* of communism, and extols the kind of auto-organization that can arise from the insurrectionary ferment of an active minority which pushes for action but does not seek to direct. Cohn-Bendit quite explicitly goes back to a tradition of left radicalism, "a revolutionary tradition these [Old Left] parties have betrayed". Across the Channel Bernadette Devlin expresses surprisingly similar convictions in *The Price of My Soul* (Knopf, 1969). She voices the same contempt for those to whom politics means debate and not action, the same concern for organizing a people's democracy on the local level, and, though a Socialist Member of Parliament from Northern Ireland, the same distrust of the State: "Basically I believe that the parliamentary system of democracy has broken down. What we have now is a kind of *Animal Farm*, all-pigs-are-equal system, whereby the pigs with MP after their name are entitled to sit in the farmhouse, and the rest of us are just common four-footed animals." In almost the same words, minus Orwell, Emma had always maintained that the history of parliamentarianism showed "nothing but failure and defeat". Once introduced, the Cohn-Bendits and Miss Devlin would recognize in Emma and Berkman kindred spirits.

The timeliness of Emma and Berkman is unfortunately more easily demonstrated than explained. Why the freeze of the '50s was followed by a flow of liberation movements is a complicated question better left to another occasion. What deserves a few words here is the relatively manageable question of why so many of us were unprepared

for this turn of events—of why, in our immediate context, Miss Scott's prediction seemed improbable even to a sympathetic writer.

Looking back over the past decade, I see the answer as having to do with our then shrunken sense of the range of possibilities in overdeveloped societies. Take, as a small example, the reaction on the left to word of strikes in the Russian concentration camps—in May 1954 some Ukrainian anarchist even flew the black flag over Camp Taichet. One main line of interpretation made such events incidental and meaningless. Writing in *Dissent* in the winter of 1955, Isaac Deutscher pointed out that—given the absolute necessity of "primitive" economic accumulation and the likelihood that Russian society would not willingly endure the attendant hardships—Stalin *had* to deprive his countrymen "of all capacity for resistance and of all means for self-expression. . . ." Though forced industrialization had since succeeded and there could be some relaxation, it had to start at the top. Rebellion from below was futile; besides, Deutscher quite frankly preferred "educated Soviet bureaucrats" to uneducated rebels. To others of us without such bureaucratic preferences, another major interpretation seemed possible. We could regard the strikes as meaningful but doomed: Meaningful in the sense that ideas of individual freedom were demonstrably dying hard; that even the most total institutions within a totalitarian society were less total than we had feared; that a few courageous men had dared put themselves in the path of historical necessity. Doomed in the sense that such resistance offered no real possibility of escape, in East or West, from the iron cage of our predicament. For me the symbolic figure of the time was the fourteen-year-old Hungarian girl who strapped a bomb to her waist and threw herself under the tracks of a Russian tank. Hers was a heroic act of defiance which was tragic rather than practical. Indeed, "tragic" views of history had very considerable appeal! In 1956 I even put together a lecture with the title "Glorious Tragedies: From Kronstadt to Budapest".

In truth, I was very nearly as deeply embedded in historicism as Deutscher. We scarcely differed on more than our attitudes toward what was happening. From both points of view, the world was driven by large, anonymous forces over which individuals had no real control. I differed in taking my stand with the Huxleys and Orwells who were saddened by this state of affairs, saddened by the objectification of man, his cowed conformity in the East and his manipulated conformity in the West. To be sure, some rare individuals like Winston and Julia in 1984 tried to live their own lives, but they were inevitably broken in the attempt.

As I see it now, this stance involved a certain preciousness and lack of faith. We assumed that only a few libertarian intellectuals would be left at large to lament the passing of the Promethean individual. We feared that students, women, Blacks, Indians, and others would remain content with their unfreedom and, like characters in one of T. S. Eliot's plays, maintain themselves by the common

routine and learn to avoid expectations. We lacked faith that many would rebel against this impoverished image of man, that they would rebel against precisely the kinds of analyses that made it impossible to predict their arrival on the scene—we lacked full confidence, in short, in our own ideas about man's explosive need for real community and real individuality. And hence we were unready for the glad tidings of the '60s.

III

Yet if we lived in a past without a future, many radicals today seem to live only slightly less pathetically in a present without a past. In *Revolution for the Hell of It* (Dial, 1969), Abbie Hoffman shrewdly warns against "Power Freaks", that is, against those who dig meetings and get their kicks out of rules. But in his "Digger Creed for Head Meetings", he further counsels:

BEWARE OF "AT THE LAST MEETING WE DECIDED . . ."
DON'T GO BACK—THERE WAS NO LAST MEETING
DON'T GO FORWARD—THERE IS NOTHING
meetings are Now you are the meeting we are Now

But there was in fact a last meeting, a last meeting of all those who could provide Abbie and his Now-generation with a usable past.

In this past Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman provided intellectual and moral sustenance for a surprising range of individuals, from Rebecca West to Eugene O'Neill and Henry Miller. Their influence turned up in unlikely places. It is even possible to demonstrate their indirect impact on the Catholic left. Catholic Worker groups have been the primary carriers of this anarchist influence on down to a present marked by the draft-board raids of the Berrigans and others. A few months ago the late Ammon Hennacy, who acted out his *One Man Revolution* into his late 70s, wrote to me that he had just finished an essay on Berkman for a new book about radicals he liked. Deeply influenced by the older anarchist during the period they were both imprisoned in Atlanta, Hennacy wrote that his last sentence in the chapter would read: "I know, too, that Alexander Berkman helped me in those perilous days, and that his being in jail again was a conscious move on his part and not an accident. He chose the hard life, and he chose the hard death. To me he is a friend, a comrade, a hero" (Letter of September 20, 1969). Their influence also crossed over cultural and ethnic lines. Olga Lang, whose *Pa Chin and His Writings* was published by Harvard in 1967, wrote some years ago that "Emma Goldman played a great role" in the life of the famous Chinese novelist: "An article of hers which he read in 1919 [as Pa Chin reported] 'opened up for him the beauty of anarchism'. On several occasions he called her his 'spiritual mother' and compared his relations to her with the relations between Romain Rolland and Malvida von Meysenburg" (Letter of November 27, 1962).

I mildly suggest, since they are not fond of being told anything, that the absolute beginners of today might also find spiritual forebears

were they to hark back to the two anarchists. Celebrating their centenary along with that of their great adversary Lenin, we can still observe that Emma and Berkman speak more directly and meaningfully across the generations to our present needs. Obviously they speak to our need to resist. They also speak to our less obvious but no less urgent need for patience and love. Let me take up each of these needs in turn.

The need to resist: In our century the nation state has been the principal engine in the slaughter of, say, 100,000,000 human beings. At the moment we stand ready to kill some whole populations 100 times over. Children are burning. Men, women, and children are being lined up in front of the trenches of the Songmys of the world. The wretched of the earth are starved and clubbed, gassed and bombed into submission. In our country, bureaucrats in the Department of Interior make a good living off misery on the Indian reservations. Civil rights legislation enables the government to repress defiant Blacks and their long-haired friends. The War on Poverty and Urban Renewal are bad jokes. The Ecology Crusade, polluted in its origins, floats on oil slicks off Santa Barbara and off Gulf ports: Lake Erie is gone and Homer's wine-dark sea, turning oil-black, may go. Those who seriously struggle to get out of this death trap strike men highly placed in public office as having "criminal minds . . . people who have snapped for some reason". So persuaded, the government moves to tighten its surveillance of radicals by expanding the secret police apparatus—informers, undercover agents, wiretaps—and has under consideration a proposal to encourage do-it-yourself snooping in neighbourhoods and offices.

No least part of all this would have surprised Emma and Berkman, for they had long urged hostility and determined opposition to such truly criminal insanity. They would be deeply pleased by the growing awareness, especially amongst the young, of the extent of our predicament. As Bernadette Devlin has observed, though members of her generation were born into an unjust world, "we are not prepared to grow old in it". The thought and experience of Emma and Berkman could not provide Miss Devlin, Abbie Hoffman, and their age-mates with full answers to their questions but could provide them with instructive precedents, dead ends to be avoided, leads to be pursued. After all, the two anarchists showed a capacity to resist the Americanizers with their melting pot foolishness, the vigilante groups across the country with their demands to shut up, and the patriots with their demands to stop opposing our imperialism in the Philippines and our conscription for World War I.

Berkman's capacity to resist even in prison was nothing short of heroic, as anyone who reads his *Prison Memoirs* will see—during his first fourteen-year stretch, his keepers tried to break his will by keeping him in solitary over a year; during his two years in Atlanta, he was kept in isolation over seven months. Following this

second ordeal he emerged with his old spirit sufficiently intact to tell J. Edgar Hoover that, whatever the laws might be, he would "follow the dictates of my conscience". Emma hardly showed less courage in daring to express sympathy for Czolgosz, the demented assassin of McKinley, during the wild hysteria which swept the country in September 1901. Both anarchists showed more of the same rare courage in their anti-conscription activities during the first of America's global crusades to make the world free. With hard times of our own coming in, their staunchness in the face of fierce repression should be an inspiration for many.

The times may be made more bearable also through the recognition that, hard after resistance, comes *the need for patience*. Somehow Emma and Berkman found the necessary patience for the long haul. We can try to do no less.

Repression is the State's ill-meant tribute to resistance. Those who seriously attempt to re-authorize the authorities ought not be surprised when the latter make use of their machinery to silence and, in extremities, to kill. Not to recognize the inevitability of their doing so is not to be serious about liberating man. And failure to recognize this commonplace can also lead quickly to that despair which, unless I am mistaken, is the real message of the recent rash of bombings, including the awful blast in the Village house on 11th Street. Emma and Berkman's experience with individual acts of terrorism might well keep some of our frantic comrades from going down this dead end. Despite spending almost a decade and a half in prison for his attempt on the life of Henry Clay Frick, Berkman summed up his experience years later by telling Emma that "I am in general now not in favour of terroristic tactics, except under very exceptional circumstances" (AB to EG, n.d.—post November 1928). Emma went farther by writing to her comrade that "acts of violence except as demonstrations of a sensitive human soul have proven utterly useless. From that point of view Czolgosz's act was as futile as yours" (EG to AB, November 23, 1928). By this time she was convinced that violence was useless: "I feel that violence in whatever form never has and probably never will bring constructive results" (EG to AB, June 29, 1928). She looked back in horror on that period in the 1890's when she and Berkman had tinkered with a time bomb in a crowded tenement on the East Side.

I have no intention of flattening their many-sided, thoughtful approach to the terrible dilemma of violence. Neither of the two became in any strict sense a pacifist. Both lived close to violence all their lives, which spanned the events of the '90s, the free speech fights after the turn of the century, the patriotic frenzy of WWI, the 1920-21 terror in Russia, and, for Emma, the Spanish Civil War and Revolution. For them, as for most radicals, the Russian Revolution was the decisive event of the century. What they saw there, which came to a climax with the horror of Kronstadt, demanded that they review and possibly revise their ideas.

Their correspondence during this period is fascinating: No doubt our faith has been shaken by the fiasco in Russia, Emma wrote, "and yet I do not think it is so much our faith in Anarchism as an ultimate ideal of society as it is the revolutionary part in it" (EG to AB, July 4, 1927). Hard at work on his *ABC of Communist Anarchism* (1929), Berkman was grappling with some of the same problems, including whether the revolution has a right to defend itself. "There are moments," he confided to Emma, "when I feel that the revolution cannot work on Anarchist principles. But once the old methods are followed, they never lead to Anarchism" (AB to EG, June 25, 1928). Emma replied that "unless we set our face against the old attitude to revolution as a violent eruption destroying everything of what had been built up over centuries of painful and painstaking effort not by the bourgeoisie but by the combined effort of humanity, we must become Bolsheviks, accept terror and all it implies [*sic*] or become Tolstoyans. There is no other way" (EG to AB, July 3, 1928). What was needed above all, she contended, was a transvaluation of the nature and function of the revolution. "I insist," she wrote, that "if we can undergo changes in every other method of dealing with social issues we will also have to learn to change in the methods of revolution. I think it can be done. If not I shall relinquish my belief in revolution."

These conclusions were not instant solutions to their fantastically complicated problems nor to ours. But out of them we can come up with hints as to how to avoid washed-out bridges to the future. The Revolutionary Force 9, for example, after bombing the offices of IBM and other major firms, sent a letter to the press in which they declared that "in death-directed Amerika there is only one way to a life of love and freedom; to attack and destroy the forces of death and exploitation and to build a just society—revolution!" But Berkman and Emma help us to see that this is the old, ecstatic, barricade conception of revolution, one that has in every instance led away from individual freedom and towards greater centralization of power. "You remain our brothers and sisters," we might say to the Revolutionary 9, "but give over repeating the painful mistakes of the past and join us in working to transvalue the nature of revolution." And were we to speak thus fraternally to them, we would give evidence of having learned yet another lesson from Emma and Berkman. Never did they yield to the temptation of striking out, from the New York *Times Magazine* section or from any other safe refuge, against those goaded to blind acts of retaliation by the enormities of ruling elites.

They gave us other hints as well. They recognized that revolutionary means must be welded unbreakably to revolutionary ends. They saw that primary among the goals of real revolution was the dissolution of power and not its acquisition. And they knew that the insurrectionary thrust toward freedom had to be protected somehow from being betrayed by the centralizers. They were therefore addressing themselves, suggestively but not altogether successfully, to what Milton Kotler has called "the central dilemma of revolution", that is, "how democracy of local control can withstand the nationalist re-establish-

ment of central power" (*Neighborhood Government*, Bobbs-Merrill, 1969).

I still find it moving that they found the strength to undertake this reworking of their ideas when they were in exile and confronted on all sides by the rising forces of reaction. Trying to get started on his book on communist anarchism, Berkman found himself immobilized by inner hesitations and doubts: "Maybe I can't write it," he wrote Emma, "because we have lost our former enthusiasm about . . . [anarchism]—I am afraid to think of it, for if *that* is the real reason, then there is no hope for it" (AB to EG, June 24, 1927). Emma rushed to encourage him, reminding him that his previous books had caused him distress, complimented him on his style, and told him not to worry about time—"To hell with time"—for his other books were great because "you didn't rush" (EG to AB, June 29, 1927). But later that summer she sent Berkman a despairing letter of her own from Canada. Disturbed by the impending execution of Sacco and Vanzetti, she wrote her old friend that, "I am going through the agony of 40 years ago, only in a more conscious form. Then I had my life before me to take up the cause for those killed. Now I have nothing. Now I realize how little I have achieved in the forty years [.] if a new crime is about to be committed and the world protests only in words" (EG to AB, August 8, 1927). Such bitter self assessments elicited from Berkman words of reassurance: "What to show indeed! You have to show a rich and varied life, and that one sentence says plenty. What more can you want? Life is to live, and you HAVE lived" (AB to EG, n.d.). But Berkman had his own bitter thoughts, as his letter to her of November 14, 1931 showed: "There really seems no such thing as progress. There are changes, not always for the best, either. But as to real progress, where is it, and what has all the work of radicals, revolutionists, anarchists, etc., accomplished?" Emma was inclined to agree: "I too have come to the conclusion, bitter as it was, that nothing has come of our years of effort." The trouble was, she went on, that recognition of a fact by no means meant reconciliation to it:

the still voice in me will not be silenced, the voice which wants to cry out against the wretchedness and injustice in the world. I can compare my state with that of a being suffering from an incurable disease. He knows there is no remedy. Yet he goes on trying every doctor, and every kind of quack. I know there is no place where I can or will gain a footing and once more throw in my lot with our people who continue the struggle of liberation. Yet I cling to the silly hope as a drowning man does to a straw (EG to AB, November 18, 1931).

And so the two old comrades helped each other survive spells of dejection, always grimly holding on to their refusal to be reconciled to the wretchedness and injustice in the world. It is well that they did, for Emma still had the Spanish Revolution to live through. But observe the essential point: By clinging to their vision when hope seemed absurd, they demonstrated unforgettably the need for patience.

The two rebels also demonstrated through their lives what the revolution was all about: *The need for love*. The fact that they had not again become lovers after Berkman's release from prison

in 1906 meant that their relationship of over four decades depended on more than or other than physical attraction. It could stand as a model for good comrades of both sexes.

For a model of what is was not we can turn to a letter from Emma to Berkman about some friends, Mollie and Senia, who were then living in Berlin: "She is always on her guard Senia may use his male prerogative," Emma reported. "Poor Senia, in addition to his worry about a living, and his poor health, it is he who has to keep house. 'Why should the woman do it [?]' Mollie insists. It is the old, old story of some of our feminists who in their fear of being subdued do all the subduing. They never learn that in friendship, or in love, there is giving and taking and not measuring" (EG to AB, March 26, 1932). The loving friendship of Emma and Berkman was not based on such calculations. To be sure, it did not always run smoothly and could on occasion be very rough. In Russia Berkman had angrily called Emma a "parlour revolutionist", always considered her given to moody fits of crankiness, and thought her "tactless". Emma called him "naive" in his attitude toward women, believed he had a streak of "the blind fanatic" in him, and thought him something of a "Puritan". On occasion they spoke their feelings very directly to each other. On one such, after a harsh letter in which he charged her with having embittered the life of his mistress Emmy Eckstein and "by reflex" his own, he concluded by writing: "As for our friendship, it can survive the occasional giving each other the benefit of one's criticisms. For it IS a benefit, or at least it should be. As for myself, there is nothing on earth that ever can come between our friendship" (AB to EG, November 7, 1932).

Nothing ever did. At the time of his second prostate operation in March 1936, Berkman wrote Emma a farewell letter with the notation: "To be mailed *only* in case of my death."

I just want you to know that my thoughts are with you [he assured his absent comrade] and I consider our life of work and comradeship and friendship, covering a period of about 45 years, one of the most beautiful and rarest things in the world.

In this spirit I greet you now, dear immutable Sailor Girl, and may your work continue to bring light and understanding in this topsy-turvy world of ours. I embrace you with all my heart (AB to EG, March 23, 1936).

The preceding November, on Berkman's sixty-fifth birthday, Emma had sent her own loving greetings:

True, I loved other men. . . . But it is not an exaggeration when I say that no one ever was so rooted in my being, so ingrained in every fibre as you have been and are to this day. Men have come and gone in my long life. But you dearest will remain forever . . . [how] is it that you had bound me by a thousand threads? I don't know and I don't care. I only know that I always wanted to give you more than I expected from you (EG to AB, November 19, 1935).

If it means anything, revolution means extending the range of possibilities for being as fully human as Emma and Berkman. It means such I-and-thou relationships. In a strict sense, a world of Emma Goldmans and Alexander Berkman would not only be ungovernable, it would be more lovable. Harking back to them is to see that therein, finally, lies their glory.

2. Back to the future

IN THE MID-1930'S EVELYN SCOTT concluded a letter to Emma Goldman with the declaration: "But you to me are the future they will, paradoxically, hark back to in time." Except for some older liberals and a few young libertarians, the perceptive novelist was alone in seeing in Emma a "third attitude", one which did not represent a commitment to the unjust present nor a counter dedication "to the defeat of all personal liberty or individually achieved idealism".

Hardboiled realism was rather more to the taste of the time, a time which prided itself on its acceptance of the corporate world, on its willingness to meet those organizational problems which would be solved, it was held, by either fascist or communist managers. What right-thinking person would prefer fascist rulers? Emma's old fashioned dedication to individual freedom struck those on the left as at best irrelevant. Indeed, she had discovered this for herself during her ninety-day return from exile in 1934. On all sides, she wrote her friend Alexander Berkman, there were "young people who do not think for themselves", who "want canned or prepared stuff", who "worship at the shrine of the strong-armed man".

Two years later, seriously ill and despondent over his forced inactivity, Berkman committed suicide. Somehow Emma managed to avoid utter despair over his death and over the subsequent defeat of her Spanish comrades—she had ably represented the Iberian interests in London—at the hands of Franco. Unwilling to give up ever, she crossed the Atlantic to raise money for this last lost cause. In February 1940 she suffered a stroke in Toronto and in May she died. Now merely a dead "undesirable alien", her body was allowed back in the United States by generous immigration officials. She was buried in Chicago's Waldheim Cemetery. As she had wished, she died fighting. She also died forgotten, or almost forgotten, with a crypt in the American memory almost as obscure as that of the Haymarket martyrs buried nearby.

It was once quite otherwise. In the 1890's and particularly after a concerted attempt was made to implicate her in McKinley's assassination, Emma Goldman enjoyed national notoriety; she had become a national bugaboo. S. N. Behrman has recalled that when he was a boy, "parents cited her to us constantly, using her name somewhat as English parents used Napoleon's in the first decades of the nineteenth century, to frighten and admonish". After McKinley's assassination,

seven-year-old Margaret Leech wrote a poem which read:

I am oh so sorry
That our President is dead,
And everybody's sorry,
so my father said;
And the horrid man who killed him
Is a-sitting in his cell
And I'm glad that Emma Goldman
Doesn't board at this hotel.

In the years that followed, Emma threw herself into a wide range of activities, most of which are represented in this collection of essays. One of the most accomplished, magnetic speakers in American history, she crisscrossed the country lecturing on anarchism, the new drama, the new school, the new woman, birth control, crime and punishment. Subject to stubborn and sometimes brutal police and vigilante attempts to silence her, she joyfully waged countless free-speech fights along lines later followed by the Wobblies (Industrial Workers of the World). Her activities moved radicals and even some liberals to action against threats to freedom of expression. In 1912 Floyd Dell recognized her function as "that of holding before our eyes the ideal of freedom. She is licensed to taunt us with our moral cowardice, to plant in our souls the nettles of remorse at having acquiesced so tamely in the brutal artifice of present day society". As for many others, especially for young women, she came to have a still more positive importance in their lives. "Emma made me what I am," once remarked Adelaide Schulkind, wife of novelist Waldo Frank and mainstay, over the decades, of the League for Mutual Aid. "Can you imagine the effect she had on an East Side girl of seventeen who knew nothing of the world of culture? She introduced me to Strindberg, Shaw, and Ibsen. I used to travel clear across town to hear her lecture Sunday nights on literature, birth control, and women."

And once again, I venture, the response toward Emma Goldman will be other than it was in the 1930's. Can you identify which of the following quotations is from her remarks on "Woman Suffrage"?

Female emancipation has not yet come. The feminists' heart-breaking struggle and incipient revolution have been aborted by male society with help from acquiescing female "Aunt Thomasinas". . . . It is the obligation of each of us to make human equality a reality, starting in our own lives. . . .

Emancipation should make it possible for woman to be human in the truest sense. Everything within her that craves assertion and activity should reach its fullest expression; all artificial barriers should be broken, and the road towards greater freedom cleared of every trace of centuries of submission and slavery.

I want full freedom and co-operation to evolve as a human being, to gain wisdom and knowledge. To be sure, I want certain rights guaranteed to me, not because I am a woman, but because I am a human being.

The second quotation is Emma's. The other two are from articles written more than a half-century later: the first by Betty Roszak, an

intelligent young ballet critic, radical, mother; the third quotation expresses the thought of Gene Hoffman, a columnist for the *Los Angeles Times*.*

Emma's keen sense of the tragedy of feminine emancipation gave her essays on this topic a surprising freshness and contemporary relevance. She quite correctly told her sisters straight out that they were settling merely for the mechanical externalities of political equality. Their vote fetishism, as she contended, made them less of a real agency of social reform or revolt. Many did become elitist, anti-labour, nativist, and racist—suffragettes, in the South shyly suggested that, were they given the vote, white supremacy would be preserved.

As you will observe, Emma practically predicted that the first ripe fruits of enfranchisement would be Prohibition and support for the election of someone like Harding. She would have been in immediate agreement with the very recent comment of a spokesman of the Women's Liberation Front: "We don't want to be equal to unfree men." Further, then as now, Emma's views could be acted upon immediately: woman simply had to assert herself as a personality and refuse the right to anyone over her body and mind. Long before Margaret Sanger, she advocated "refusing to bear children" unless women wanted them and, as a midwife and nurse, helped some women avoid unwanted pregnancies. In 1916 she cheerfully spent some time in jail for distributing birth control information. Were she alive today, she would certainly sympathize and support her spiritual sisters in WITCH (Women's International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell) who have proposed

*See *Liberation*, Vol. XI (December, 1966), 30-31, 32.

In *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, first published in 1845, Margaret Fuller posed the problem in almost the same words: "What woman needs is not as a woman to act or rule, but as a nature to grow, as an intellect to discern, as a soul to live freely and unimpeded to unfold such powers as were given her when we left our common home"—Margaret Fuller: *American Romantic*, Perry Miller, ed. (Garden City, N.Y., Anchor Books, 1963), p. 150. In this respect, the future we must hark back to is perhaps as remote as Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*. *Plus ça change*.

Though Emma refers to Margaret Fuller, as you will observe in "Minorities versus Majorities", she probably had not read her predecessor's essays. The remarkable similarities in their lives and thoughts were rather rooted in the fact that both were American romantics, despite their different backgrounds, both drew on Emerson and other common sources, including George Sand, and both confronted problems which have plagued intelligent and sensitive women down to the present. In my biography of Emma, *Rebel in Paradise* (University of Chicago, 1961), I should have pointed out, and did not, that these two passionate feminists shared the conviction that true freedom commenced with internal change, that any single doctrine or set of institutions was imprisoning, that public disapproval could be contemptuously dismissed, that revolutionary situations might be joyously welcomed and courageously supported, and that the body, in all its splendid sexuality, had to be reclaimed from the repressive hands of the prudes and philistines. They were even fond of some of the same imagery, as when Emma named her magazine *Mother Earth* and when Margaret regretted that Emerson was so abstract and "perpendicular and did not lie along the ground long enough to hear the secret whispers of our parent life. We could wish he might be thrown by conflicts on the lap of mother earth, to see if he would not rise again with added powers" (p. 198).

abortion ships, well-equipped and staffed floating hospitals to steam just beyond the twelve-mile limit and perform abortions in a decent manner and for a reasonable fee. As a modern Witch asks: "If there can be floating gambling parties for high society 'charity' balls with legal impunity, well . . . ?"

To be sure, Emma's outbursts of indignation occasionally seem excessive, sometimes even slightly ridiculous. Take, for example, her discussion of the arms race of her day, the campaign of T.R. and other militarists for a bigger and better navy and army: "It is for that purpose that America has within a short time spent four hundred million dollars. Just think of it—four hundred million dollars taken from the produce of *the people*." Just think of it: exactly this paltry sum was allotted in the defence budget of 1969-70 for "major developmental activity on no fewer than six new aircraft"; the general programme in arms research and development received a total of \$5.6 billion, which included funds for work on missiles to be smuggled down on the ocean floor—indeed, the last defence budget of the Johnson Administration came to \$81.5 billion, \$5.2 billion of which went simply for ammunition use in Vietnam. Yet it is, of course, our world and not Emma's indignation over the misuse of resources that is absurd. She had her eyes on a major engine of the transformation of America when she warned "that militarism is growing a greater danger here than anywhere else, because of the many bribes capitalism holds out to those whom it wishes to destroy". And she was certainly on the mark when she contrasted the puny violence of individuals with the large-scale violence of the state and put the latter in its proper, if sadly prophetic, context:

We Americans claim to be a peace-loving people. We hate bloodshed; we are opposed to violence. Yet we go into spasms of joy over the possibility of projecting dynamite bombs from flying machines upon helpless citizens.

Along with most other radicals of the period, Emma had a blind-spot when it came to the importance of race. In her attempts to come to terms with the imperialism of what was to become the American Century, she followed other radicals in grossly overestimating the importance of the capitalist drive for markets, resources, and gain. In her discussion of the Spanish-American War, for example, she did not make the obvious connection that many of the officers and men busy subjugating Filipinos had a short while before been Indian fighters, busy right up to the 1890's in killing Red rebels and in herding the rest of their tribes into those concentration camps called reservations. You will look in vain in *Anarchism and other Essays* for an illustration of Emma's magnificent outrage directed against the lynchings and oppression of Blacks. It was not because she was herself a racist. In *The Traffic in Women* she did make fleeting reference to "the brutal and barbarous persecution [of] Chinese and Japanese . . . on the Pacific Coast. . . ." When she was in the federal penitentiary in Jefferson City, Missouri, doing a two-year sentence for her activities against conscription in 1917, she related in a warm, human way to all the other inmates,

Black and White, and had close friends in both groups. It was because, rather, even for someone as alert as Emma, the Blacks and their plight were essentially invisible. She and her contemporaries were more than a little blinded by the kind of pervasive economism traceable to Marxism, with all that doctrine's unfortunate inattention to racism and nationalism.

Yet, even if she remained largely unaware of the complicated interrelationships of racism and nationalism, she had a full realization that patriotic nationalism was poisonous and an intuitive sense of the still greater horrors which would be committed in its name as the twentieth century got under way. "The individual is the heart of society," she kept repeating and saw the individual's very existence threatened by increasing concentrations of economic and political power. The liberal's confidence that this threat could be met by a few managerial adjustments and his faith that the good life could be achieved through the increased application of technology struck her as dangerous nonsense. In its stead she offered the anarchism of Kropotkin, which undertook to replace authoritarian hierarchies, the coercive political state, and supernaturalistic religion by a warm humanism, a society of equals, and a polity of small organic organizations in free co-operation with each other.

She thus had a theory, one with imaginative possibilities that still remain to be explored, but she was not a theoretician. She combined her acceptance of Kropotkin's communist anarchism with a generous admixture of the individualism she found in Ibsen and then readily admitted that the result might fall short of full adequacy. Young rebels of our time must sympathize with her reply to the charge, already a cliché, that she had no "programme": she made no attempt to detail the future, she explained, "because I believe that Anarchism can not consistently impose an iron-clad programme or method on the future. The things every new generation has to fight, and which it can least overcome, are the burdens of the past, which holds us all as in a net" If you object to a programmed present, how can you be held responsible for programming the future? Emma's openness to new beginnings in the arts, to experimental drama, for example, and to jazz, her insistence that anarchism goes beyond economic change to "every phase" of life, added an aesthetic dimension to Kropotkin's thought and made her thinking of immediate relevance to contemporary cultural revolutionists.

"Anarchism is the great liberator of man from the phantoms that have held him captive," argued Emma and proceeded to do her best to help out the demystification process. She and her comrades made their contributions, but they were undoubtedly sped along by the gas ovens, atomic bombs, language of overkill, napalm, colonial wars, ghetto riots, assassinations. Events and thoughts have joined to unmask systems of totalitarian and manipulative social domination for what they are: systems of domination and repression. One result has been a world-wide renewal of interest in anarchism. A surprising number of persons, especially the young, have penetrated the escalating irra-

tionality of nationalism to see the state revealed as a death trap. They have hardly any choice but to conclude with Yakov Bok in Malamud's *The Fixer*: "If the state acts in ways that are abhorrent to human nature it's the lesser evil to destroy it." If they want to go about it humanely, and not destroy themselves in the process, the modern prophetic minority might well hark back to Emma. Her most fundamental message was the paradoxical command to be yourself and be your own commander-in-chief. And who can dismiss her formulation of the problem?

The problem that confronts us today, and which the nearest future is to solve, is how to be one's self and yet in oneness with others, to feel deeply with all human beings and still retain one's own characteristic qualities.

If not in her nearest future, what about ours?

AN UNPUBLISHED LETTER OF EMMA GOLDMAN

Paris, September 10, 1938

Dear Vero,

Barr will have told you about my being laid up with a severe cold. That is the reason I kept postponing to write you. Stupid of me to have gone out last Saturday lightly clad when it was so chilly. I felt fairly well Sunday so also went out. Sunday night I could not sleep and got up feeling abominably, nevertheless I dragged myself to the American Express. For the afternoon I had invited Jeanne Berneri to come to me. So I kept up though I felt the wrath of god. That was the end until yesterday when the fever subsided and I got up for a little while. Today it was very much better except for a racking cough that keeps me awake and tears all my nerves and insides to pieces. However I am definitely on the mend, and am determined to go after my reservation on the Aviom and my ticket to Toulouse. Not to take a chance I am allowing myself another few days though it will mean a loss of ten days, when I could have been in Barcelona last Monday. But it would have been folly to go to Spain feeling as wretchedly as I do. To any other country there would have been no risk. But to add to the large number of sick and helpless in Spain with no medical facilities would have been criminal.

However, there is a worse drawback, the possibility of War. It looks most threatening. I am divided between my passionate longing to see our comrades again and the work the SIA is doing and my feeling of wanting to be in England where I might at least raise my voice against the whole bloody mess. I have a hunch that the Spanish comrades will support the War against Germany and Italy. They probably will have no choice, for as one Spanish comrade here told me "we are condemned to death anyway, a World War might help us". It is

EMMA GOLDMAN's letter was kindly made available by Vernon Richards.

reasonably certain that the moment War will be declared both France and England will rush supplies to Spain to help get the Germans and Italians out of the country, which would of course mean the end of Franco. In consequence the anti-Fascist forces will feel in duty bound to come to the side of France, England and Russia. But I will not be deceived by that. I know already that all the high sounding slogans of War to crush Fascism and Nazism will only be used to blind the masses and to strengthen Imperialism as well as Bolshevism. With my most ardent desire to be of help to our people I could not join them in support of the new World War. I am inclined to think I will stand pretty much alone in my protest against the coming conflagration. In any event I will have to tell the comrades how I feel about the whole beastly situation. I have decided therefore to go to Spain anyhow. I have to make my position clear and unmistakable to our Spanish comrades. So I am going.

Dear Vero as you know Spain is not exactly the safest of countries, and while I am no alarmist I feel I must be ready to face every emergency. This by way of saying that if something should happen to me you should make known to the comrades through *Spain and the World* that I will go as I lived believing to the end in the ultimate triumph of our ideas. Also that you should explain to the comrades that though I disagreed with much that our Spanish comrades had done I stood by them because they were fighting so heroically with their backs to the wall against the whole world, misunderstood by some of their own comrades and betrayed by the workers as well as by every Marxist organisation. Whatever verdict future historians will give of the struggle of the CNT-FAI they will be forced to acknowledge two great actions of our people, their refusal to establish dictatorship when they had power, and having been the first to rise against Fascism. It may seem little now but I am certain it will weigh in the balance in the historic appraisal of the Spanish revolution.

However I fully hope to come out safely and be back in London early in October.

Ethel tells me you are planning a book review number. That is fine. I hope you will use Rocker's article which I understand Ilse sent to Ethel to smooth over the language. Read's book can stand two reviews, besides Rocker's is really a splendid essay on Anarchism which is needed now.

If I had not felt so seedy I should have enjoyed the visit of Marie Louise's mother and sister. She too is most attractive. I liked them both. And though I never confessed it I love Marie Louise, not you of course.

If you care to write me a line you can still do it if you mail your letter early Tuesday. I fear I shall have to wait to depart Wednesday evening for Toulouse.

Love to Marie Louise and some for you as well dear Vero.

EMMA

Naturally you will not use the above unless as I said something happens to me.

Marcuse's allegory

KINGSLEY WIDMER

AS AN ANARCHIST, I'VE LONG HAD MIXED FEELINGS about that major part of the "New Left" revival which has been, accurately enough, described as "Anarcho-Marxism". That whole curious fusion of radical libertarianism and traditional Marxism deserves broad and subtle consideration. But here I only want to comment briefly on one of that ideological history's most symbolic figures: Herbert Marcuse. Let me grant from the start a quite personal interest since I know, and like, the man. That, of course, has not stopped me from heated words with him about anti-libertarian aspects of his thought, such as the heavy censorship advocated in his essay "Repressive Tolerance", or what I feel to be authoritarian and elitist elements in his Hegelian-Marxist heritage. Still, in a quite disinterested way, I believe there is much of value in Marcuse.

Much of the contemporary significance of Marcuse's thought may be peculiarly American. He intensely responds to the present American scene with a large, indeed quite "un-American", dialectic of total politicalization. An allegorist in the grand manner, Marcuse sees all of our cultural and social forces as playing out the drama of "Domination" versus "Liberation". As against the usual refusal of choice, the pseudo-sophistication in which every anger and action are devalued because our world is too murky, "complex", puzzling, those poetic-political metaphors themselves help liberate. They intensely insist on a shape to our experience and open up consciousness to passionate possibilities.

Totally committed to the "idea of a non-repressive civilization" (*Eros and Civilization*), Marcuse demands that we reinvigorate the "Great Refusal" of all forms of domination and dehumanization. Since "all liberation depends on the consciousness of servitude" (*One-Dimensional Man*), Marcuse devastatingly presents the paradoxes of our "repressive satisfactions" in affluent mass-technological societies. Thus we should discover our bland technology doing the work of horrific terrorism, even when claiming the greatest beneficence, and perhaps most especially then. Examined in terms of the broadest and deepest possibilities of human liberation, we can see that most of our freedoms are counterfeit, such as those of speech in our self-censoring media, those of autonomy in our manipulated "democracy", and those of fulfilment in the pseudo-gratifications of consumer society. Relentlessly, Marcuse sees that our over-development obscures our under-humanization, and that covering this is history's falsest rhetoric—an

"insane rationality" which provides new accommodations to old exploitations and updated mystifications for outdated repressions. In sum, not only is this a false society at its supposed best, its "best" is often the very way of making it even more false.

Consequently, Marcuse has a truly radical vantage point. It takes that, and in the broadest intellectual ways, to not get entrapped in the amelioration, co-optation, and manipulation so characteristic of intellectuals and which endlessly re-enforces and sanctifies an essentially exploitative and repressive order. Marcuse argues that full-dimensioned criticism must be "more negative and more utopian" (*Negations*) in order to counter the vicious processing and controlling to which we are all so subject. Critical intelligence, in contrast to our dominant bureaucratic scientism, must not allow the self-serving neutralization of thought and feeling which has become the submissive standard of our institutionalized culture. For this time, "accusation becomes the true function of science". (The "objectivity" claimed by our scientists and technicians and organizers is an ideological trick.) Marcuse, of course, is using "science" in the old philosophical, not the current submissively puzzle-solving, sense. Much else in Marcuse's thought also comes from the nineteenth century, in which he was born, and leftist European culture of pre-World War I. But Marcuse is also in love with the presentness of tomorrow and empathetic with current revolt. Not only does he intensely, and personally, relate to present student revolt in the United States, he also argues that current Western rebellious culture portends a vision of "society as a work of art" and that the counter-culture's "new sensibility has become a political force" (*Essay On Liberation*). Marcuse's pertinence, radical sweep and tendentiousness can, in spite of egregious abstraction and some deep political ambiguities, give a powerful impetus to oppositional thought. We should bear this first in mind and not, like some sectarians even amongst anarchists, come down on the authoritarian Marxist rather than the libertarian cast of his thought.

How strange, too, to see so few of Marcuse's concerns in much of the writing on him. Radical allegories provide only alienated labour to those institutionalized in the decorous games which dominate Anglo-American political and cultural criticism. The most recent example at hand, Alasdair MacIntyre's *Herbert Marcuse*, is mostly such stock stuff. This British academic starts out by contending that "almost all of Marcuse's key positions are false" and concludes that all Marcuse has done to "freedom and reason" consists of "betraying their substance at every important point". Nonsense. The one possibly interesting point is not discussed: Why did MacIntyre write this uninformative and mean little book?

Probably it would have to be explained not by any serious concern with politics and thought but by intellectual jobbing, by the coterie racketeering which dominates much of such publishing these days. This is the first volume in a series, "Modern Masters", which will supposedly provide an "authoritative" account of present "revolutionary thinkers". Written by well-connected British and American academics,

this is a sadly appropriate example of the corruption and co-optation of radicalism, as one might expect because of the general editor, Frank Kermode, the favourite, and over-rated, British literary critic of Anglo-phil Americans. Not the over-kill rhetoric of street radicals but the fashionable mannerisms of exploitative intellectuals bloodies revolutionary consciousness these days.

The ostensible main line of MacIntyre's polemic is the rather unimportant pendency that Marcuse shows himself to be more left-Hegelian than Marxist. Probably so. But he is wrong in thinking this suggests why Marcuse has been influential, which more comes from his combining a traditional total view, a large political allegory, with harshly immediate perceptions of Western social realities. We also need a sense, which MacIntyre quite lacks, of what often happens to Continental ideologies transported to America. The sea-change arouses the iconoclastic and anarchist qualities suspended and confined in traditional elitist theories. There is a "natural" anarchist impetus at work in American culture.

But no such perceptions can reach those who have not had the nuclear experiences which radicalize one against the *pax Americana*. MacIntyre feels that we suffer most in contemporary Britain and America from a "lack of control" instead of from the powerfully warping and amorphously repressive controls which centre the radical perception of our societies. Those like MacIntyre who lack all sympathy with opposition to social domination, libidinal repression, and alienating work and art, can in no way engage Marcuse's moral imperatives.

In one of his smug put-downs of Marcuse's efforts to radically re-interpret Freud's social-cultural theory—also the major purpose of Marcuse's new book, *Five Lectures*—MacIntyre writes: "Marcuse wishes to envisage a possible social order in which human relationships are widely informed by that libidinal release and gratification which, according to Freud, would spell the destruction of any social order." With rather comic nervousness, he also asks: "What will we actually do in this sexually liberated state?" I suppose one might answer that we will do those things which come from being more passionately alive and responsive—the real test of a social-political theory—even when distorting Freud and denouncing more imaginative philosophers.

Marcuse does intriguingly start from the tragic psychic and social conflict which provides the theme of Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents*. There Freud held that civilization requires renunciation and regulation which must be essentially painful and defeating. However, unlike most conservative views, this is not preservative and static; indeed, those who follow out Freud's dialectic, as have a good many left-Freudians, recognize some radical possibilities. After all, Freud insisted on a precarious tension between the order and productivity man needs as a social being and the libidinal gratification and ease he desires as a biological and psychological individual. Regulation is as much of a threat as is pleasure. Marcuse argues that the degree of regulation Freud accepted was primarily historical, and that reality

has changed. Civilization, especially as represented by technologized and affluent America, now poses possibilities beyond the repressive ordering justified by the scarcity and elitist ordering that Freud saw as his necessary reality. Partly the new possibilities come as the dividends of earlier renunciations and regulations, partly as a rejection of the "surplus repression" that came from a particular ideological domination of society. Now, argues Marcuse, "a free society for all has become a real possibility". The old repressive order has produced, at a terrible price, the quantitative means for a qualitative change in social life. A new fusion of the classical opposites of "sensuousness and reason, happiness and freedom", awaits if the forms of domination, now displaced into "technical-administrative" authoritarianism from the old patriarchal and work controls, are transformed.

Marcuse acknowledges the fatal alternative by ending his first lecture, "Freedom and Freud's Theory of Instincts", on the apocalyptic note that our increasing rationalization of destructive processes may accelerate the death-instinct and produce a "catastrophe that will pull the archaic forces down with it"—a basic change in the psychology of social nature—before we can reach the freer and happier "higher stage" of civilization. Either way, historical change will revise Freud's model of civilization and allow utopian—essentially anarchist—social possibilities.

However, the following lecture, "The Idea of Progress in the Light of Psychoanalysis", includes an unacknowledged reversal. Catastrophe, so imminent in Western civilization, could destroy the humane possibilities since "technical progress . . . is the precondition of freedom", material advancement of moral advancement—an essential Marxist principle. Marcuse is no primitivist and specifically rejects the pan-sexual regressions implicit in most left-Freudians for the "mediated enjoyment" of an artful culture and a rich social order. We should bemusedly note that it is the anarcho-Marxist, not his critics, who is most fully committed to a "high civilization".

In "The Obsolescence of the Freudian Concept of Man"—the title is half-ironic—Marcuse argues that our permissive change in the past generation, "a society without fathers", has, by undermining the traditional images of authority, allowed us to repress the reality of our still continuing repressions. Or, as I would put it, our gaudy dress of moral and social patches of freedom obscures the rigid body of the same old falsities and dominations and deadness. Now, says Marcuse, an exploitatively organized and controlled "technical code" substitutes for the traditional "moral code". Our injustices disguise themselves as neutral techniques, including the ultimate political techniques of "democratic authoritarianism". We have subverted the old ways of forming character, with which Freud dealt, replacing the rigid individual ego with a mass ego, but without much real increase in social rationality and freedom. Since Marcuse has a vision of a new imaginative rationality and a liberated happiness, he is not taken in by our counterfeits and often aptly perceives how the old dominations and repressions take new guises.

In dialectically suggesting the psychic drama beneath the political scene, Marcuse does allow for some significant changes, though I think he underrates the long-term effects of the breakdown of traditional authoritarian character patterns and of the consequent social rigidities. In his early writings, Marcuse held, with the classical socialists, that labour was essentially alienating. Consequently, he followed the traditional leftist emphasis that labour could only be rationally minimized (shorter hours) and freed from class exploitation (surplus value). Our narrow, autocratic and often reactionary labour unions, and our system-sustaining social-democratic and "labour" governments, essentially relate to such ideology. Now, however, Marcuse believes that alienated labour can be eliminated. Thus he argues in the fourth lecture, "The End of Utopia", that Marx did not go far enough, did not allow the realm of freedom to interpenetrate and ultimately conquer the realm of necessity. This is a crux of a libertarian view. We can now propose utopian transformations based on "the convergence of technology and art and the convergence of work and play". The historical imperative of the new modes of production not only undermines the previous ways of alienation and domination but allows new human needs, especially those arising from the "aesthetic-erotic dimension" of life, which could culminate in a new society.

Historically, Marcuse reverses "scientific" socialism into its anarchist-utopian base and implicitly rejects much of the old leftist puritanism and Marxist-Leninist repressiveness. His utopian vision does not deny that life will still have tensions, both from the dialectic of material history and from the primal psychic drama posited by Freud. But progress is a real possibility in the "pacification of existence" from the most repressive forms of the archaic crimes and the exploitations and injustices of a false psychic and social ordering.

Marcuse's abstract poetry, his left-Hegelian and left-Freudian allegorical extension of our realities, wonderfully suggests utopian possibilities. Only such an allegory of post-domination and beyond-repression needs can provide a truly liberating social view. As with the anarchists, there is no politics without imagination. But Marcuse's characteristic abstraction also takes its toll. I want to note several weaknesses. These become especially evident in this book in the appended answers to Berlin student questions and in the last and weakest of the five lectures, "The Problem of Violence by the Opposition". There Marcuse's undialectical vague justifications of the universal right of violence lacks all discrimination as to kinds and ways and places of violent resistance. The essentials become blurred when violence is not seen in perplexed and tragic perspective of tangible human life, and not related to the ways of being, as well as making, a new society.

Some similar abstracting limits Marcuse's sense of our material possibilities. He reveals an excessive enchantment with American techniques and automation and gadgets. We can readily grant his argument that our technology and superabundance only allow condemnation of our quite unnecessary deprivations and inequalities and

ugliness. Most scarcity justifications for exploitation and domination are gone and therefore our authorities stand revealed as illegitimate. (This recognized illegitimacy of authority is probably the major cause of present disorder and rebellion in the United States.) But, it seems to me, to make maximized technology and superabundance the conditions of freedom and happiness subordinates all humane values and futures to technical organization. We would eliminate scarcity and alienated labour by submission to the repressive consciousness of the new technocracy. Instead, we should propose a different, and properly limited, productive mode without our present dedication to destructive abundance as well as abundant destruction. More simply, we can use Marcuse's own sort of argument to conclude that any liberated society cannot be as technologized, rich and powerful as America.

And who is to bring about the great change? Unlike much of current New Leftism, Marcuse does not regress into a pseudo-Marxist sentimentalization of the working class. Labour, especially in America, is patently not the current and foreseeable agent of change towards the needed liberation since it is not only "integrated into the system" but deeply conservative in sensibility. Could the agent of change be the educated-technical "new working class" beloved of some neo-Marxists? No, says Marcuse with some reluctance, for the engineers, etc., are too well rewarded by the present system and any imperative of theirs to social change moves only towards more "technocratic state capitalism". Will, in countries like America, the ethnic minorities provide the transforming group? Apparently not, not primarily anyway, since their economic and cultural roles are marginal and their consciousness mostly confined to particularistic grievances. The "Third World"? Marcuse waffles a bit on this but I think he holds that the Liberation Fronts are probably incapable of altering the internal dynamics of Western Civilization, which they also damagingly tend to plagiarize. What about the underculture, the *declassé* carriers of our pervasive "moral-sexual rebellion"? Marcuse is more than sympathetic since he insists on a revolution in sensibility, but, with usual Marxian fear, scurries away from the anarchist view that it is the declassed, *lumpen*, and outsiders who make the revolutions.

What is left? The estranged middle-class. Marcuse can only insist on the significance of the "intellectuals and students" now modifying the sensibility and resisting our false order. Contrary to Marx, he insists that "humanitarian and moral arguments . . . can and must become social forces", and so awaits the change of consciousness and the enlargement of rebellion in the "interstices within established society". Though a highly abstract theorist, Marcuse actually locates his arguments exactly where American radicalism is, when not taken in by its own loose rhetoric, at.

But, as one of Marcuse's accusing student questioners says, "You have shifted the accent towards enlightenment and away from revolution." True. Perhaps Marcuse should risk furthering the scope of his vision, his call for a liberated sensibility and society, instead of

returning to the ambiguities of American realities seasoned with traditional theories and apocalyptic fears. Certainly there is enlightenment in considering the present society with his dialectical negations and visions, at least for those capable of responding to the allegorical abstractions. But his abstraction also goes beyond style to a potential deification of an historical technocracy without human agent. Thus we reach the irony that total politicalization, a grand allegory of Domination and Liberation, ends without adequate politics. Still, that may be part of the bitter necessity of contemporary radicalism, and therefore not a complete criticism. Many anarchists might add that this is why they insist on liberation being integral to all the small tangible acts of everyday life. But, in social fact, that is also not sufficient, and we rightly need to be recalled to the largest vision of Liberation amidst our Domination. For any real understanding of Marcuse—and this helps explain the nasty rage of many of his critics—must further liberate consciousness and a resistance to our false culture and destructive societies.

Revolution, evolution and reform

LYMAN TOWER SARGENT

IN HIS COMMENTS ON MY ARTICLE, "An Anarchist Utopia", Laurens Otter takes an offhand remark and uses it to develop a major commentary. In doing so he makes a number of important points which indicate the need for further analysis. Specifically, it is necessary to look at the various alternative means of changing society to see their various relationships to anarchism. Mr. Otter begins this process in his comments, but there is obviously a need for further analysis.

The most fundamental notion of any radical theory is that society needs to be changed. In fact, it might be difficult to find anyone who did not accept the idea that any given society needed change in some direction. Accepting the desirability of change, it is then necessary to consider two other questions—the goals and the means. The three major concepts of change, revolution, evolution, and reform, may be

able to be distinguished by their relationship to these two questions. If it is not possible to do so, one or more of the terms must be rejected.

Revolution is the key term in this discussion. In its most general sense revolution today means a fairly rapid and significant change in the most basic structures and processes of the society.

There are a number of serious problems with this conception of revolution. In the first place, social institutions do not change easily or rapidly even in a revolutionary context. The persistence of the traditional family system in China despite repeated attempts to change it is only one example. In other words certain behavioural patterns are likely to persist for quite some time after the revolution. Second, not all members of the society will be affected even by revolutionary change, at least not immediately. Again using China as an example, the nomadic tribes of the border regions have not been settled despite persistent attempts to do so.

These problems force us to a slightly different conception of revolution. It may be best to conceive of revolution as composed of three segments. In the first segment (analytically not chronologically) there is a very rapid change in the power relations in the society. The phrase "power relations" is used in order to avoid any implication that this segment or stage of the revolution is merely a change in office-holders. In this way it is possible to distinguish revolution from the *coup d'état* and the other violent and non-violent changes in governments or office-holders that do not significantly change power relations within the society. The anarchist of course intends to change power relations most significantly—by doing away with them.

In the second segment there is the change, varying considerably in speed, in the other social relations and in the value system. This change *after* the period we normally think of as constituting the revolution is the period of consolidation of the revolution and the institution of its goals in the fabric of society. It will be uneven in its achievements over any period of time, but it can be seen as equal in importance, if not more important, than the first stage. It may be most accurately seen as a guided evolution. The word "guided" implies some sort of revolutionary elite that will exist after the revolution, whether holding formal positions of power or not. These will probably be the activists that brought about segment one.

The third problem with the conception of revolution, even as modified, is peculiarly difficult. It is possible for the most basic social relationships within a society to change without the upheaval that we normally associate with the term revolution. This is not simply to pose a contrast between a violent revolution and a non-violent revolution. It is to say that societies do at times change radically over a fairly short period of time. So if we simply talk about radical change within a fairly short period of time the word revolution applies to a variety of phenomena that we usually do not and should not associate with the term.

There seems to be a way out of this dilemma if conception of revolution having a goal is accepted. Revolution must take place in the name of some desired end. If this construction of the term is accepted it is possible to include violent or non-violent revolution while excluding other changes in society that happened as a result of a variety of unplanned changes.

Mr. Otter also criticizes me for my use of the phrase "almost spontaneous" in connection with the French revolution of 1968. I think that in this case Mr. Otter has made a serious error in his conception of revolution. The whole idea of a spontaneous revolution is related to Lenin's notion of "the spark". Lenin argues, quite correctly I believe, that for all the planning and preparation a revolutionist makes in attempting to bring about a revolution, it is in fact impossible, or nearly so, to say with any certainty when the mass uprising will take place. The occurrence in France in 1968 seem to me to be an almost perfect example of the sort of thing that Lenin was saying. Certainly much preparation went on beforehand, but a spark of some sort set off an uprising of major proportions. At the same time it is possible to conceive of a different type of revolution such as that of China or Cuba in which military victory characterizes the revolution. This could in no way be called a spontaneous revolution. The occurrences in France in 1968 certainly can by way of contrast be called a spontaneous revolution and do seem to fit the conception of revolution sketched out by Lenin better than virtually any other revolution of modern times.

This brings us to the third stage (the first chronologically) of the revolution—the preparation. This is clearly a process made up of many different types of activities—it can best be conceived of as a guided evolution similar to the period of consolidation. The parallel to Kropotkin's "gradualist revolution" should be obvious. Since there is probably no such thing as a purely spontaneous revolution, the recognition of the period of preparation as a part of the whole process of revolution allows us to relate revolution more clearly to the other two possible concepts of how change is achieved in society—reform and evolution.

Mr. Otter also criticizes me for the following statement: "It is likely, I believe, that a revolution today would not produce an anarchist result. A revolution today, if unsuccessful, is likely to produce more suppression, and if it is successful, it is still likely to produce an authoritarian regime." Although I would like to believe differently, I can't. The question of an unsuccessful revolution seems so obvious that I don't feel it needs further comment. But the question of a successful revolution needs more explanation. There are two important words in the statement—"today" and "likely". I am saying simply that a revolution today is more likely to result in an authoritarian regime than an anarchist society. People today would choose a police state with apparent stability to an anarchist society because they have

been socialized to believe that government is essential to stability. Change in this is certainly possible, and that is why the word "today" is so important in my statement.

Reform can be seen as the process of piecemeal modification of the society without significantly changing the basic characteristics of that society. There is a goal—the maintenance of a pattern of relationships that is not significantly different from those currently existing. Reformers can be motivated by two slightly different attitudes. First, they can see the threat of a fundamental change in society and wish to stave it off. Second, they can wish to redress grievances within a system that they believe to be the best one. Obviously both attitudes can be present at the same time.

Reform is fundamentally anti-revolutionary and can in fact be seen as the best weapon in the hands of the anti-revolutionary. Reform presents the revolutionists with a major dilemma. If he supports reform and the reform results in even marginal improvement, he has probably helped delay the revolution. If he rejects reform, the least revolutionary element among his supporters, usually a significant number, are likely to leave him. Thus reform, intelligently used, can de-fuse a potentially revolutionary situation.

Fortunately for the revolutionists, reform can backfire in two ways. First a reform that improves the lot of a thoroughly suppressed group, such as the blacks in the United States, may give rise to demands for meaningful change. Second, it is possible, though unlikely, that reform piled upon reform in a piecemeal way could fundamentally alter relations in a society. Reforms that had this result could be said to be failures from the point of view of the reformer, but over a long enough period of time basic social relationships can be changed significantly through reforms.

In no case though is reform going to produce an anarchist society. The very nature of reform makes this impossible. It often originates within the power structure and normally is controlled by those with power. Therefore it is not going to change these power relations significantly—certainly not as significantly as required by an anarchist society.

Mr. Otter suggests two possible meanings for the concept evolution.

First he suggests evolution as "the gradual process of development" and argues that "there is not the slightest evidence that this is an anarchist direction at the moment, or is likely—without some basic change in direction—to move in this direction". Second he suggests, as has been mentioned before, the possibility of evolution "as it is used in nature: as a description of a general process of development characterized by a number of cataclysmic (fundamental) breaks in development . . ." these are certainly commonly used notions of evolution, but they do not exhaust the possible meanings of the term as a means of approaching social change.

Neither of these suggestions take into account my previous discussion of *guided evolution*. This notion, probably closest to Kropotkin's "gradualist revolution", presents the possible alternative of a group of people actively working to gradually transform society. It is not incompatible with my notion of revolution, as outlined above, but it stresses gradualism rather than speed. It is also more likely to be non-violent, but that can be seen as a question of tactics rather than theory.

Clearly tactics and theory are closely interrelated, but they can be analytically separated for present purposes. The tactics chosen must be carefully analyzed to determine whether or not they will in fact help achieve the goal of a transformed society. Many modern "revolutionists" have forgotten the goal in favour of a continuing series of symbolic protests. Each separate protest or demonstration can be useful, but some "revolutionists" today actually seem to think that significant change will be brought about this way. This is particularly true of the American student—he is essentially a reformist for all of his rhetoric. His tactics have no chance of overthrowing the system, and he seldom looks beyond tomorrow's demonstration. He is unwilling or unable to see the process of change as long-term. He has been mesmerized by the notion of revolution as one glorious cathartic burst of violence. He believes in the purely spontaneous revolution—the one that is undoubtedly impossible.

This is not intended as a put-down but as an attempt to clarify some of the confusions that surround the movements for change that exist today. The rhetoric is revolutionary—the actions and motivations are essentially reformist. This is clearly demonstrated by the primary reaction to the killing of four students at Kent State University—shock. They did not believe that the system might shoot. They obviously believe very deeply in the system to reject their own rhetoric in this way.

The transformation of society can be brought about in many ways. Revolution and evolution are two words for two slightly different approaches to significant change. We must not attach too much importance to the words, and we must be flexible enough to realize that reform must also be accepted, however dangerous it might be for the ultimate goal, because even temporary piecemeal amelioration of poor conditions is desirable. We cannot ask the poor, the hungry, and the unhoused to wait for the coming society—the current system must be changed *now* to help them. In doing so support may be temporarily lost, but if the system is really as bad as we say it is, the support will not be lost permanently.

RIDING WITH THE HOUNDS: A REPLY TO RICHARD DRINNON

I AM GRATEFUL THAT YOU PUBLISHED (in ANARCHY 109) Richard Drinnon's "remarks from the chair at a recent session on anarchism at the American Historical Association's Convention", since otherwise I would have missed an opportunity to reflect with amusement on the ironies and absurdities of the scholarly life.

For the interesting fact behind this incident is that there but for the grace of my past might have sat I. I was invited before Professor Drinnon to take the chair at the very session he opened. I did not go for the simple reason that in 1955 I was refused permission to return and teach in the United States because of my anarchist antecedents, and have since been barred from the Land of the Free because I have declined to make the statements required by the American authorities, i.e. that I am no longer an anarchist and regret ever having been one. I regret nothing of my past, which has made me what I am; as for being an anarchist now, I have long ceased to consider labels important, but I am nearer to anarchism than to any other doctrine I know, and I refuse in any case to use my dislike of labels as a bargaining counter with a government. What I am is my concern and should have no bearing on where I live or where I travel.

I enlarge on this point, since Mr. Drinnon was perfectly aware of the situation when he rose to make his address at Washington. He must have been, since I had clearly stated my situation in the article in *Commentary* (August 1968) to which he refers. What Mr. Drinnon chose to say is of course a matter of his own choice, but if I had been in the chair in his place and he had been kept north of the border, I would have felt obliged to use the occasion to refer, at least in passing, to this example of my country's record in heresy-hunting. I would hardly have ridden—if not with—at least beside the State Department hounds to do a little private heresy-hunting on my own account.

I respect Mr. Drinnon's right to his opinions—of anarchism and of me. I do not admit his right to distort what I have said. He quoted a statement in my *Anarchism*, published in 1961, in which I say that anarchists at that time "form only the ghost of the historical anarchist movement, a ghost which inspires neither fear among governments

nor hope among people nor even interest among newspapermen." That statement—strange as it may seem in 1970—was true when it was written in 1960, and it was intended only as a statement for that time. For the purposes of his argument, however, Mr. Drinnon decides to call it a *prophecy*, and therefore attempts to change what was a truth for the present into a falsehood for the future.

I am not concerned about *Time's* or Spiro Agnew's definitions of anarchists, though their views seem to impress Professor Drinnon. There are clear and acceptable definitions of anarchism other than those which equate it with nihilism and chaos; not all those who are called anarchists (not, for that matter, all who call themselves anarchists) are covered by those definitions. Here, I suggest, Emma Goldman showed herself a good deal more clear-sighted and discriminating than her biographer.

Let us consider the example of Daniel Cohn-Bendit, whom Professor Drinnon brings forward as an example to disprove my argument that the present spurt of anarchism "lacks continuity with the historic movement".

I will diverge for a paragraph to point out what I actually said. I argued in *Anarchism*, and elaborated in my *Commentary* article, the point that the anarchist idea, which appeared long before Proudhon ever used the word to describe himself, had and has a continuous life. In *Anarchism* (p. 15 of the Pelican edition), I said of anarchism: "As a doctrine it changes constantly; as a movement it grows and disintegrates, in constant fluctuation, but it never vanishes. It has existed continuously in Europe since the 1840s, and its very Protean quality has allowed it to survive where many more powerful but less adaptable movements of the intervening century have disappeared entirely." In the same book I distinguished the "historic anarchist movement", by which I meant the organizational movement that derived from Proudhon via Bakunin and reached its apogee and defeat in the Spanish civil war, from the complex stream of ideas which in the wider sense is anarchism. And I said: "But ideas do not age, since they remain free of that cumulative weight of collective human folly that in the end destroys the best of movements. And when we turn to the anarchist idea, we realize that it is not merely older than the historical anarchist movement; it has also spread far beyond its boundaries. Godwin, Tolstoy, Stirner, Thoreau, made their contributions to the anarchist idea from outside and even in opposition to the movement." And I went on to say that "the anarchist ideal may best fulfil [its] purpose . . . by the impact of its truths on receptive minds rather than by the re-creation of obsolete forms of organization . . .".

This, I submit, is precisely what is happening. Those who are true anarchists today—and I wonder and rejoice at the number of them—have very often little knowledge of and less concern about the "historic movement". They have been won by the ideas of

anarchism, the doctrines of mutual aid and decentralization and control of one's own affairs that are essential to it. Professor Drinnon, of course, fails to prove anything more. Certainly his one example is a very poor argument for establishing continuity with "the historic movement". He tells us that "Daniel Cohn-Bendit . . . is well aware that while Marx stood to the left of Proudhon, Bakunin stood to the left of Marx". Indeed! Many people have had that awareness (I suspect at one time Lenin did) without even claiming to be anarchists. All it proves is that Cohn-Bendit has been subjected to anarchist *ideas*, anarchist *books*, not that he belongs in any way to the historic anarchist movement. In fact, when he encountered the rump of that movement at the famous conference in Carrara, he showed very clearly that he did *not* belong. He showed it in such a way as to prove that he was *in no way* an anarchist, for the basis of disagreement was Cohn-Bendit's defence of Castro's dictatorial communism.

The fact is that Mr. Drinnon appears to have a very unclear conception of what an anarchist really is. As well as Cohn-Bendit, he introduces Rudi Dutschke (whose followers have abandoned their Nazi-like chant of "Ho-Ho-Ho Chi Minh" only to take up "Mao-Mao-Mao Tse-tung"), and Bernadette Devlin, who is a spirited girl, but as deep-dyed an Irish Nationalist as you will meet anywhere, and the Black Panthers with their counter-racism. It is a long way from self-glorifying demagogues of this kind to the "self-help, mutual-aid movements, organized from the bottom up" that Mr. Drinnon talks of at the end of his speech. "Neither God nor Master?" Of course! But do not let us forget, when the orators bray and the crowds chant their hypnotic slogans, the eternal vigilance which we are told is the price of freedom. There is much anarchism about today, but it will not last for long if we fail to detect the growth of its opposite, already deeply rooted in the New Left and the radical youth movements throughout the world—an intolerant, authoritarian and elitist spirit that will strengthen rather than weaken reaction and fascism on the right. Like calls to like. Remember how many of the elitist left went over to the elitist right in Italy and Germany. Leaders, orators, heroes: they are all the stuff out of which power is made. And even out of the blood of the martyrs—what was made strong? A church! One can only repeat the words of Peter Arshinov with which I ended *Anarchism*. "Look into the depths of your own beings. Seek out the truth and realize it yourselves. You will find it nowhere else." Act, co-operate, but follow no leader, no matter what lip service he pays to libertarian ideals. That is anarchism as I see it. And—I repeat—hundreds of thousands of people accept it today without much knowledge of the historic movement and without any sense of the need to belong to it.

Vancouver

GEORGE WOODCOCK

in Anarchy
next month:
Students and
community
action

McLuhanism
— a libertarian
view
