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boils down to faith. This is true of every ideology, but anarchism appears to require a bigger dose of it than most.

there any more. On the other hand, it is argued that we must recreate it if we are to survive.

Be that as it may, it is the case that where anarchism seems to work, if only for a time, is in small, simple, self-sufficient communities. It is not at all clear that it is remotely compatible with modern society, with its high degree of integration and complex mutual interdependence.

Problems with anarcho-capitalism

Modern individualist anarchism, now most forcefully represented by anarcho-capitalism, has its own problems. There are basically three of these, failure to solve any of which could be fatal to the enterprise. The first is the problem of law and order, Anarcho-capitalists insist that this can be dealt with through private protection and arbitration agencies, but only the most fervent believers find this convincing.

Second, there is the problem of public goods. These are goods, like public parks, street lighting, roads, clean air, defence and so forth, which cannot besupplied individually to people who pay for them. We presently pay for them through government taxation. But if there is no government and all things are provided by the free market, how could private firms ensure that everyone pays who uses these things? If they were provided anyway, it would be in an individual's interest to enjoy the good but not pay, to be, as the Americans say, a 'free-loader'. Because of free-loading, many would then not pay for others to take advantage, and then the firm providing the good would give up the business and nobody would have it. Again, while anarcho-capitalists offer ways around this, few find them plausible.

Finally, there is the argument that letting capitalism do whatever it wants will lead to mass exploitation and all the horrors that go with it. The anarcho-capitalists deny this would happen, while others are sceptical. In the end, as with all these criticisms, it all

The word 'anarchy' comes from the ancient Greek and means 'without rule', and in ordinary parlance 'anarchy' means the same as 'chaos'. But there is a long-established body of political theory calling itself 'anarchism' that is based upon the idea that the state, or any other kind of political rule, is not only unnecessary but a positive evil that must be done away with. Such ideas have only occasionally inspired political movements of any size, and the tradition is mainly one of individual thinkers, but they have produced an important body of theory. The first significant anarchist thinker was William Godwin, who developed his ideas around the time of the French Revolution. However, the idea that it is possible to do without the state was not invented by the anarchists, but has a much older history in Christian theology.

There is a long tradition in European thought, going back to the great theologian and exponent of the theory of Original Sin, St. Augustine of Hippo (354–430 AD), which argues that government is needed because human nature is corrupt, and that if it were not corrupt then government would not be necessary. On this view, government is essentially coercive, being there to keep the sinners in line by laying down laws and punishing those who break them. It was an idea still strong in the eighteenth century. Thus, James Madison (1751–1836), the chief architect of the American constitution, wrote:

> there is a degree of depravity in mankind that requires a certain degree of circumspection and distrust… But what is government itself, but the greatest of all reflections on human nature? If men were angels, no government would be necessary.
> (*The Federalist Papers*, Nos. 51 & 55, in Hamilton et al., 1961)

Neither Augustine nor Madison were anarchists, but what this line of thought did open up was the possibility that government

could be done away with if the evil in the world could be eliminated.

What the anarchists did was to say that the evil in the world was not caused by Original Sin, but was in fact mainly the consequence of government. As the poet Shelley (William Godwin's son-in-law) put it:

> Kings, priests and statesmen blast the human flower
> Even in its tender bud.
>
> (*Queen Mab*, 1812)

If government was taken away human beings would be good and all coercion and domination would be unnecessary.

Individualist anarchism

The first anarchist thinkers, in both Europe and America, saw themselves as, for the most part, continuing the Enlightenment tradition, emphasising the sovereignty of the individual and the progress of reason.

William Godwin

It was William Godwin (1756–1836), in his *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* of 1793, who first argued the anarchist case: that the state had a corrupting influence on those subject to it, and that a much better society could therefore be built without it.

Godwin had an optimistic, Enlightenment view of human nature. Our individual natures, he thought, were the product of our environment and upbringing, although that could be improved upon by the application of reason. With the spread of science and philosophy and improved education, there was no doubt in his mind that mankind would gradually improve. The ills of war, poverty, crime and violence would disappear, since he took it for

Problems with socialist anarchism

Socialist anarchism is based on common ownership and distribution on the basis of need. It would appear to presume a considerable degree of discipline and commitment among the members of the community and a good deal of agreement. What happens to people who do not pull their weight; or to those who do not accept the authority or discipline of the community; or who do not agree with the distribution; or who want to go off and do their own thing, start a business or whatever? It is all very well to assume that all will share the same values, but if they do not then there will be divisions. There are, therefore, doubts about the practicality of anarchist communities.

The evidence is in fact ambiguous. It is true that there have been anarchist communities that have shared and lived together. These have been of several kinds, and had with different outcomes. The communities of the kind inspired by individualists, such as Josiah Warren, discussed earlier, were fairly successful. But they were not communistic; everyone minded their own business and did their own thing, and they gradually evolved into ordinary communities. Communities based on sharing tended not to last, unless there was some religious inspiration. As with the hippie communes of the 1960s there were difficulties in making sure people did their share of production, and even of chores; people joined and drifted away as the spirit moved them.

Anarchism has seemed to work best with established communities living a traditional way of life (as in parts of Spain during the Civil War). This tends to reinforce the idea that the appeal of socialist anarchism is to a lost past of social solidarity that is quite incompatible with our contemporary devotion to individualism and personal freedom. The present-day version of social anarchism that has the greatest following, green anarchism, seems to rely on a similar appeal. The social cohesion to make this possible is just not

volves shared beliefs and values, as well as shared ways of doing things and ways of behaving. If the individual refuses to share any of this it is difficult to see in what sense they would be a member of the community. Certainly it would not make sense to talk of a community composed of such individuals.

narchists are inclined to say that they only reject coercive authority and since nobody is formally punished for using language incorrectly, following generally accepted authoritative rules is unobjectionable. The question then becomes where one draws the line. At this point anarchists divide between individualists and communists. Individualists who are 'doing their own thing' may not be able to work together to form a community, to do the necessary tasks, to get things done. Communist anarchists require a high degree of co-operation and authoritative decisions (usually by means of direct democracy), which cannot accommodate the dissenting individual who may not accept the authority of the majority.

This argument becomes a practical one of what will and will not work. All forms of anarchism involve a reliance on natural harmony, such as the unhindered market or unhindered reason or unhindered sociability, that will assert itself once the hindrance of the state has been removed. Anarchists are sustained by a faith in one or other of these harmonies, while the rest of us tend to be sceptical. The seventeenth-century philosopher, Thomas Hobbes, argued that with the removal of the coercive authority of the state, society would degenerate into a war of all against all in which the life of man would be 'solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short'. Most people are inclined to believe that the taking away of all forms of coercive authority would lead to conflict. To believe otherwise requires a considerable degree of faith.

granted that the consequence of people becoming more rational is that they became more benevolent towards their fellows. He held the utilitarian view that the greatest good was the greatest happiness for the greatest number, and that any truly rational person would understand this and behave accordingly; that is, human nature as we observe it would change as the environment which nurtured it changed.

There were, however, certain obstacles on the way to progress, and chief among these was the state. The common belief that the state was necessary for social life was a myth. The state maintains itself by deception and violence, and by keeping the population in ignorance. The process artificially sets one above another, and induces competition and greed and conflict, which are the source of the ills from which mankind suffers. It is only when the domination of man over man has ceased that people can live a fully rational life. The abolition of all political institutions would put an end to class distinctions and national feeling, and the enviousness and aggression that goes with them. It would restore to men their natural equality and enable them to rebuild social life on the basis of free and equal association, governed by their reason alone.

Godwin was a radical rather than a revolutionary. Revolutions, and for that matter ordinary party politics, polarised society and aroused passions that resulted in the eclipse of reason. Social progress was entirely dependent on intellectual progress, which in turn came from reflection and discussion. The ideal could only be pursued as the entire population was gradually brought to the level of understanding presently confined to the few. It was a lengthy process, although Godwin never doubted the inevitability of its completion.

Max Stirner

The next significant work of a European anarchist was a strange book entitled The Ego and His Own, published under the name of

Max Stirner in 1843. The author's real name was Johann Caspar Schmidt (1806–56), and he was for a time a schoolmaster before sinking into misfortune and debt. Schmidt was personally a mild and timid man, but his book is a violent expression of pure individualism, which glorified rebellion, crime and violence in the name of the uninhibited free will. The state, society, religion and morality are all denounced for suffocating the free spirit. The assertion of the self, at any cost, was the only good. The state, with all other manifestations of collectivist man, must be destroyed to make way for a world of unrestrained egoism (that is, selfishness and self-assertion); a world of unique and powerful individuals who will come together and co-operate spontaneously as and when its suits their individual interests. But what kind of a social life this would make possible Stirner does not tell us. His book shocked society when it was first published, but was then forgotten until the end of the century when it was revived and widely read by anarchists.

Both Godwin and Stirner developed versions of anarchist doctrine based on individualism, but there the resemblance ends. For while Godwin's was an Enlightenment individualism that stressed the capacity of all to participate in universal reason and be capable of rational self-direction, Stirner's was very much a Romantic individualism that stressed will and emotion and the assertion of unique individuality. Neither of them founded political movements or had much of a following, and after them the trend in European anarchist thinking was towards socialist anarchism.

Nineteenth-century American anarchism

It was in America that the individualist strand of anarchism continued to develop. Here it was perceived by its followers as a logical extension of Lockean liberalism and Jeffersonian democracy, that is, the 'natural rights' of life, liberty and property were sacrosanct, while the state's role as the appropriate vehicle for defending those

more fully and happily once the state has been removed. Only then will humanity's natural sociability assert itself and create a spontaneous natural order superior to any that could be imposed from above.

This, however, is only a partial and initial account of human nature. To complete it we have to see the kind of spontaneous order and harmony that anarchists believe the ending of the state will call forth. It is at this point that different anarchist strands disagree.

Thus, Godwin emphasised human rationality and believed in a natural order arising spontaneously if human beings were free to exercise their reason. Kropotkin believed humanity's naturally evolved instinct for co-operation and community would assert itself. Green anarchists put their faith in man re-establishing a natural harmony with nature, following which everything else will fall into place. Finally, the market anarchists believe that giving free reign to man's natural instinct to pursue his own self-interest will result in the natural order of the market.

Anarchism is open to a variety of criticisms. Some of these apply to anarchism in general while others apply to individual strands within the broader tradition.

Rules and authority

The most fundamental criticism of anarchism is that if we take it to its logical conclusion it simply does not make sense. That is, if we take seriously the idea that 'anarchy' implies without rule or authority. We might imagine extreme anarchists who, on principle, refused to follow any rule they did not make up themselves. Such a policy could not be pursued consistently, and would be self-defeating. Take, for example, the case of language. If this individual refused to follow the rules of sentence construction, and put words in their own peculiar order, then they would not be able to communicate with the rest of us. A more general point can be made about rules of behaviour. To be part of any community in-

that it will continue as an expression of freedom to differ for a long time to come. However, as a serious political theory it does have considerable difficulties.

Fundamentals and criticism

Anarchism covers such a wide range of beliefs, from extreme individualism to extreme collectivism and from extreme capitalism to extreme communism, that it could be argued that there cannot be much, if anything, that unites all the strands. The question of whether there are such common principles turns on the question of whether there is a specifically anarchist conception of human nature and its relationship to society. Upon this answer turns the further question of the viability of anarchism as a political doctrine.

Anarchism and human nature

Anarchism can be said to rest upon certain basic assumptions about human nature and its relation to society:

a. Society is based on free association between people and is natural.

b. The state is based on the domination of some by others, is maintained by coercion, and is not natural.

c. Humanity is essentially good, but is corrupted by government.

d. Government cannot be reformed, but must be destroyed altogether.

Anarchists of all kinds agree that human nature is such that it will not flourish in conditions of coercion and domination, especially those represented by the state. Human beings will live

rights was questioned. The American anarchists tried to show that government had 'become destructive of these ends'.

Godwin's writings were well known in America, but the first important American anarchist, Josiah Warren, was initially a follower of the English socialist, Robert Owen, and was a member of his ill-fated American colony of New Harmony. Its failure in 1827 left Warren convinced of the need to fit society to the individual and not the other way round. He was thereafter a fierce advocate of the absolute sovereignty of the individual, with which no organisation of government had any right to interfere. After the relative success of his 'time store', based on the exchange of promises of labour time, he founded a series of communities based on similar principles, without any regulation or means of enforcing decisions. The first, called the 'Village of Equity', failed because of an epidemic, but the second two, called respectively 'Utopia' and 'Modern Times' lasted for a couple of decades each and convinced their founder of the rightness of his principles.

Warren worked out a complicated economic system (set out in his main book *Equitable Commerce*, 1852) that was based on people charging for their goods exactly what, in terms of labour time, it had cost them to produce them, only modified by taking into account the 'repugnance' of the work involved. In addition there would be free credit, except where a loan involved a demonstrable loss to the lender. This is what he meant by 'equitable commerce'. A society based on honest exchange between free people, he believed, would be harmonious and prosperous, and not need government to run it. Warren seemed to have in mind an unchanging society of small farmers, craftsmen and traders, much like that envisaged by Jeffersonian democracy. Some of his followers, however, adapted his ideas to factory conditions. Workers would still be employed by bosses, but both would receive the same wages, related to hours worked, and there would be no return on capital invested. Nor would special talent or skill receive special reward, for that, according to Warren, had nothing to do with the just reward for

hours worked. A system of this kind would be quite incompatible with capitalism, and was, as such, regarded as a version of socialism.

There were a number of writers and thinkers who followed Warren and developed ideas of their own, but the most distinguished contributor to the tradition in the middle of the century was Henry David Thoreau (1817–62). His attempt to live a life of absolute simplicity in the woods near Concord in Massachusetts (chronicled in his book *Walden*) was rudely interrupted by prosecution and imprisonment for his refusal to pay his poll tax. Thoreau objected to the legal confiscation of his goods for purposes from which he gained no advantage, and which immorally upheld slavery and engaged in wars with other countries. This experience prompted a passionate essay, entitled *The Duty of Civil Disobedience*, which attacks government and insists upon putting his own conscience above the law. The essay begins:

> I heartily accept the motto, 'That government is best which governs least'; and I would like to see it acted up to more rapidly and systematically. Carried out, it finally amounts to this, which also I believe, 'That government is best which governs not at all'; and when men are prepared for it, that will be the kind of government which they will have.
>
> (quoted in Woodcock, 1963, p.429)

The essay would be influential in the next century with political figures such as Ghandi, but Thoreau was ignored in his own time. Besides, he was far too much of an individualist to have a following or to try to start a movement.

Benjamin R. Tucker (1854–1939) was the leading American anarchist of the late nineteenth century. Like Warren, he also saw his ideas as socialistic, although he was much more committed to the

Anarchism and postmodernity

One of the features most associated with the claim that we now live in a post-modern world is the rejection of authority. Postmodern thinking tends to be libertarian and anti-authoritarian, celebrating freedom and choice and variety in all things, and questioning the right of those, including the majority, to impose their views on those who are different or think differently. Anarchism might be said to fit well with the spirit of the age.

With the decline of Marxism since 1989, anarchism has flourished among groups who reject modern society, protest against its manifestations and seek alternative lifestyles. These include New Age travellers, eco-warriors and others. In the summer of 1999, anarchists organised a seemingly peaceful protest against capitalism in the City of London which in fact turned into a riot. It subsequently appeared that the event had been organised through the internet and that a considerable network of such groups existed across Europe and America. Subsequent meetings of international financial bodies in Seattle, Washington, Prague and elsewhere were accompanied by more rioting. The organisation of these protests has been without overall leadership, through multiple voluntary networks in true anarchist fashion. They have drawn together a host of protesters, concerned with green issues, Third World debt and other matters. More recently, meetings of the EU have become a target.

One of the features of contemporary anarchist thought is its diversity and willingness to explore possibilities of culture and technology as arenas for protest and subversion of power and authority, through hacking into capitalist information systems, encouraging free access to commercial music, resisting attempts to control or regulate the internet, popular participation in urban renewal and many other issues.

There seems little chance of anarchism becoming a serious political movement as it once was, but equally there seems little doubt

applies to law and order, the key difference with the minimal statists.

Anarcho-capitalism began as the outlook of a relative handful of intellectuals, but its ideas have spread and found resonance on the right of the American political spectrum. Murray Rothbard in particular has made common cause with minimum statists in the Libertarian Party, now a significant small party devoted to a drastic reduction of American government to defence and law and order. There are links here with the right wing of the Republican Party, which also seeks to reduce government, as seen in the 'Contract with America' of Newt Gingrich and the Republican majority in Congress in the early 1990s.

There is, however, a more sinister link with the American far right. In 1995 the federal building in Oklahoma City was blown up, killing 169 people and injuring 500. It was the act of a few people acting alone, but they had links with the state militia movement which believes that the federal government is part of an international conspiracy to deprive ordinary Americans of their rights. These people arm themselves against the day when there is a confrontation with the federal government. Hatred of government is strongly felt in certain sections of American society, and has increased with the end of the Cold War, so that the government's role of defending against the evil of communism is redundant.

Finally, it is not in fact the case (as is sometimes thought) that anarcho-capitalism came out of the blue, without past or pedigree. It has a good deal in common with the earlier American tradition of individualist anarchism, particularly that of Benjamin Tucker. There is also a link with the extreme version of classical liberalism represented by Herbert Spencer and his followers, who saw the role of the state progressively diminishing as free-market capitalism, and therefore social progress, advanced. However, whatever the independent history and standing of anarcho-capitalism might be, its fortunes seemed bound up with those of the New Right generally, and will advance or decline as they do.

free market, and even believed his socialistic anarchism to be consistent with classical liberalism. He argued that the reason why the free market appeared to generate exploitation and huge disparities of wealth was that it was not genuinely free. The market was rigged and distorted by monopolies, for which governments were largely responsible. If the four main monopolies of money, land, tariffs and patents were abolished, then competition in a free market would bring down prices to approximately production costs and interests rates to near zero. In these circumstances anyone could set up a business, land would belong to those who worked it, and no one need be poor or exploited.

From 1881, Tucker published the journal *Liberty*, which became a great forum for radical thought in the period. By this time, European versions of communistic anarchism and theories of violent activism, both of which Tucker detested, were arriving in America. When his printing presses were burnt down in 1907 and *Liberty* ceased publication, the native tradition of individualist anarchism was broken and did not reappear until very recently.

Although individualist, US anarchism thus far tended to see itself as leaning towards socialism in the sense of stressing an egalitarian society of free, independent individuals, seeking to appeal to the common man, and in its hostility towards the rich and privileged. On the other hand, US anarchists were not opposed to the market as such, and tended to see humans beings as intelligent pursuers of their self-interest. Unlike Godwin, they did not foresee a change in human nature, but merely the creation of a society where the pursuit of self-interest was more enlightened and mutually beneficial. Their ideas therefore relate to late-twentieth-century anarcho-capitalism. Like Godwin, they eschewed both revolutionary activity and ordinary parliamentary politics, relying on the power of reason, persuasion and education (Josiah Warren promoted his ideas through a journal entitled *The Peaceful Revolutionist*).

The immigrant strand of communist anarchism, derived from Europe, was the more dominant strand by the end of the nineteenth century. However, before turning to the socialist and revolutionary anarchists, a further strand of the individualist variety needs to be mentioned.

Personal anarchism

Since the end of the nineteenth century, there has always been number of individualist anarchists who have usually stood apart from the social revolutionaries. They have pursued freedom in their own way: either through campaigning publicly for their beliefs, or by withdrawing from society to live a life at odds with accepted social norms. What these anarchists demand is freedom from society's pressure to conform, or, as they would express it, freedom from ignorance, superstition and moral prejudice. The kinds of things they have usually had in mind have been artistic freedom, sexual freedom and freedom from religious intolerance. Society, they insist, has no right to impose these things. The individual is sovereign.

We now take for granted many of these individualist anarchist demands. This is partly because there is good deal of overlap between their demands and certain liberal ideas of the late nineteenth century, which have been extremely influential. This is the kind of liberalism particularly associated with John Stuart Mill, who argued that the state has no right to interfere in an individual's way of life, providing he or she is doing no harm to others. In this respect individualist anarchism can be seen as an extreme version of liberalism. The main difference is that all liberals accept the necessity of law and the state. What Mill advocated was maximum possible freedom within the law, whereas all anarchists reject law and the state as unnecessary.

in his book *Anarchy, State and Utopia* (1974), take the view that the only thing the state should do is provide law and order. Indeed, Nozick insists that for the state to take citizens' property, as taxation, for any other purpose is positively immoral. It is only a very short step beyond this 'minimal statism' to downright anarchism. Among those who have taken this step the most important are David Friedman (son of the leading New Right economist Milton Friedman) and Murray Rothbart. In books such as Friedman's *The Machinery of Freedom* (1973) and Rothbard's *For a New Liberty: The Libertarian Manifesto* (1973) they argue against there being any form of state at all, leaving everything to free-market capitalism. Hence the name, 'anarcho-capitalism'.

There are many anarchists of the more traditional variety who would not recognise such ideas as authentic anarchism, and for whom rampant unregulated capitalism would be an evil of horrifying proportions. It would reproduce all the horrors of the industrial revolution and worse; poverty, exploitation and squalor would again be the lot of the workers. Needless to say, the anarcho-capitalists do not see their ideas in this light. They see their primary concern as human freedom and, like all anarchists, they see the state as its chief enemy, a 'protection racket' as Rothbart calls it. They see capitalism as benign, and any faults it is thought to have as the result of state intervention. State regulation creates monopolies, or reduces the number of producers, in a multitude of ways, and it is in such situations that exploitation takes place. In a stateless situation that is genuinely free, there will be prosperity and opportunity for all, and the only differences of wealth will arise from differences of talent and application. Society will be characterised by a spontaneous harmony.

Much of the literature of anarcho-capitalism is devoted to demonstrating how government attempts to help people through collective action end up doing more harm than good, and how the free market could provide whatever was necessary more cheaply and efficiently and to the greater satisfaction of all. This even

movement, or 'social ecology' as he calls it, as the culmination of the various radical movements of the 1960s, and as fully in the anarchist tradition:

> Social Ecology draws its inspiration from outstanding radical de-centralist thinkers like Peter Kropotkin, William Morris, Paul Goodman, to mention a few, amongst others, who have advanced a serious challenge to the present society with its vast, hierarchical sexist, class-ruled status, apparatus and militaristic history.
>
> (quoted in Porritt and Winner, 1988, p.236)

He insists that it is not individuals that are responsible for the world's appalling condition, but the racist, sexist capitalist system. He sees the impulse to dominate other human beings (in the first instance, of women by men), and the impulse to dominate nature, as a continuum, and all to be resisted.

Bookchin is a self-conscious anarchist, but the movement has strong anarchist characteristics quite independently of this, and what are clearly anarchist ideals are held by a great many who are entirely innocent of the anarchist tradition of political thought. For many greens the future sustainable society needs to be stateless and composed of a network of self-sufficient communes, based on equality, participation and direct democracy.

Anarcho-capitalism

At the same time, a quite different form of anarchist theory was developing at what would, at first thought, seem to be hostile territory at the opposite end of the ideological forest, amongst the writers and thinkers of the New Right.

The New Right sought a reduction of the state in favour of the free market. Some New Right theorists, such Robert Nozick

Socialist anarchism

The main trend in anarchist thinking in Europe after Stirner was towards socialist anarchism which, while insisting on individual liberty, saw society as based on a network of communities of people working together. A number of thinkers contributed to this increasingly influential tradition.

Proudhon

The first of these was a self-educated French printer by the name of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809–65). If anyone can be said to be the founder of modern anarchism as a political movement it is Proudhon, and he was the first thinker to call himself an anarchist. He developed the anarchist case against capitalism in addition to the case against the state. He is probably best remembered for his aphorism 'property is theft', although this does not accurately reflect his views. He did not object to private property as such, but only the possession of such property as gave one man power over another. Indeed, he thought it essential that every individual own his own home, together with the tools and land necessary to do his work. A minimum of property was necessary to maintain independence and liberty, and he objected to communism on the grounds that it took these away. He was fiercely individualistic, writing:

> My conscience is mine, my justice is mine, and my freedom is a sovereign freedom… To be governed is to be watched over, inspected, spied on, directed, legislated over, regulated, docketed, indoctrinated, preached at, controlled, assessed, weighed, censored, ordered about, by men who have neither right, nor knowledge, nor virtue. That is government, that is its justice, that is its morality … Whoever puts his hand on me to govern me is a usurper and a tyrant; I declare him my enemy.

(*General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century*, 1851, in Proudhon, 1923, p.294)

Proudhon's ideal was a world of small independent producers — peasant farmers and craftsmen — who associated and made contracts with each other freely for their mutual benefit, and for whom a centralised coercive state was an unnecessary evil.

It is not difficult to see in Proudhon's ideas the reaction of the independent craftsman and peasant proprietor against the new age of industrialism and a longing for a world that was passing away (although he did take factory production into account, believing that this should be based on worker co-operatives), and it was among just such small producers that his ideas took hold. Yet he was more widely influential than this. His followers played an important role in the First International and in the Paris Commune of 1871. On the other hand, Proudhon disliked parties quite as much as any other kind of formal organisational structure, and he also disliked rigid structures of thought in the form of theories or programmes that everyone has to agree to. He refused to call his ideal society a 'utopia' in the sense of a system that once established could not be changed. That would be an intolerable limitation on freedom. Each generation, he believed, must be absolutely free to solve its own problems in its own way.

This points to a central difficulty in Proudhon's thought. He wanted a society based on mutualism, with free bargaining between individuals and communities. Since such free bargaining was not possible in a situation where some were more powerful than others, he was, therefore, anti-capitalist. On the other hand, he was more individualist than collectivist. He wanted a society based on a voluntary association of independent communes, but also wanted a situation where everyone was equal and could do what they wanted, and each commune could run its affairs as it chose. These are potentially in conflict (such as some becoming

nothing. The formal education system all needs to be replaced by a voluntary network in which people take charge of their own education, just as in the wider world they need to take charge of their own adult lives. The key to transforming society is the abolition of the schooling system.

Illich in particular emphasises the sheer inability of the compulsory state schooling system to perform the very task it is set up to do, and links this with the inability of massive state bureaucracies to do any of their appointed tasks. Thus we have a defence system that fails to provide security; a social security system that perpetuates poverty; a health service that does not make people healthier; and so on. (This argument is one of the very few links between New Left anarchism and New Right anarchism, although the explanations and remedies are different.) The general reason for this failure, Illich believes, is that people are not, as they ought to be, in charge of their own lives.

Feminist and green anarchism

Another outcome of New Left anarchism is anarchist feminism (sometimes called 'anarcha-feminism'), in which the state is seen as an expression of male dominance, a dimension of patriarchy that must be abolished if women's emancipation is to be accomplished. As with the New Left movement itself, there is among radical feminists generally a specific and self-conscious strand of anarchism, but also anarchist ideas and attitudes have a pervasive influence over the whole movement. There is the traditional anarchist rejection of conventional politics: there has not been (nor is there any prospect of) a Women's Party. The emphasis is on decentralisation and co-operative small-group democracy, with no national leaders. The same could be said of probably the most important area of anarchist influence today, the green movement.

Murray Bookchin, one of the leading figures of the American green movement, sees what he takes to be the authentic green

manifested in 'hippies', 'flower power', 'drug culture' 'sexual liberation' and the fashion for 'communes', all of which were expressions of a distinctly anarchist outlook.

Recent developments in anarchist theory

In the New Left there was a kind of merging of the Marxist and anarchist traditions. However, there were several distinctively anarchist outcomes remaining after the youthful rebellion had died down. These included deschooling theory, feminist anarchism and green anarchism. The same period has also seen an entirely new strand of anarchism developed, anarcho-capitalism, which has far more to do with the New Right than the New Left. Both of these have affinities with more recent postmodern developments.

Deschooling society

One of the most odd, yet most influential, movements that grew out of the New Left was the 'deschooling' movement, associated with Paul Goodman, Paul Reimer and, most famously, Ivan Illich (*Deschooling Society*, 1970). It was essentially an educational theory, and followed a distinguished tradition of educational theorising by anarchists, starting with William Godwin. Education must be central to the anarchist vision. It is the only viable alternative to revolution as a means of creating the anarchist society, and, even where revolution is the means, it would still be essential to the maintenance of society the revolution had created. However, deschooling theory became a fashionable educational theory for a while, far beyond the confines of radical intellectual circles.

Essentially, deschooling theory argues that schooling as we know it does not in fact educate. All it does is to process and certificate people for modern industrial society; and it is essentially the same process in liberal democratic states as in communist ones. Many spend years being 'schooled' and learn virtually

successful and rich through their own talents) but he was unclear how the combination could be sustained.

Bakunin

Proudhon's most famous disciple was an extraordinary Russian aristocrat named Mikhail Bakunin (1814–76). While Godwin, Stirner and Proudhon confined their rebelliousness to their writings, Bakunin was a rebel in everything he said and did. He scorned all conventions of behaviour and charged about Europe involving himself in every plot, conspiracy and insurrection he could find. He was completely devoted to revolutionary activity, with little thought of his own safety or anyone else's. Despite years of harsh imprisonment his faith was undimmed and he lived to become the father-figure of European anarchism and inspirer of generations of anarchists.

Bakunin began his revolutionary career by advocating a general uprising of the Slav peoples and the creation of a great pan-Slavonic federation under a revolutionary dictatorship that would lead mankind out of oppression towards freedom and equality. He wrote (rather ironically as things turned out):

> the star of revolution will rise high and independent above Moscow from a sea of blood and fire, and will turn into a loadstar to lead a liberated humanity.
>
> (*Appeal to the Slavs*, 1848, in Bakunin, 1980, p.65)

He later abandoned ideas of revolutionary dictatorship and pan-Slavonic nationalism; but he always retained an almost mystical belief in violent revolution as a great purifying and regenerative force:

> Let us put our trust in the eternal spirit which destroys and annihilates only because it is the unsearchable and

> eternally creative source of all life. The urge to destroy is also a creative urge.
>
> (*The Reaction in Germany*, 1842, in Bakunin, 1980, p.57)

Bakunin did not, however, believe in mass political parties as an instrument of revolution, but in small secret bodies of professional revolutionaries on the Babouvist model (which later influenced Lenin) who would inspire and lead spontaneous insurrections of peasants and workers.

Bakunin believed that mankind was oppressed by the duel power of church and state. They both relied on the myth of human selfishness, upon which was based the claim that human beings were not fit for freedom, but need the guidance of religious and political authority. Science, Bakunin believed, would put and end to religion, but it was only the people who could destroy the illegitimate power if the state.

Like Proudhon, Bakunin believed that anarchism was the logical outcome of the ideals of the French Revolution, and that revolutions were the necessary means by which humanity progressed. Bakunin believed that ultimately the whole world would be engulfed in a revolution that would destroy the class system and the nation-state. Henceforth property and inheritance would be abolished and mankind would be organised in a worldwide federation of industrial and agricultural communes based of the principle of 'from each according to his ability, to each according to his work' (not according to *need* as held by Marx and other socialists).

Bakunin's vision was more socialistic than Proudhon's. The basic unit of society is the commune rather than the individual. He argued that since all must be afforded the means to earn their living and not be economically dependent on anyone else, then property rights must belong to the community and not to individuals. Human beings must be free, yet man is by nature a social being who can only flourish in a community of equals. Bakunin marks a

a strand, but also a central part of the general New Left outlook, as is apparent in the writings of such leaders as Danny Cohn-Benditt, the French student leader, and in the thinking of student groups like the French 'Situationists' and the Dutch 'Provos' and 'Kabouters' and the whole American 'counter-culture' movement. The New Left as a whole was profoundly anti-authoritarian, such that it could fairly be described as 'anarcho-Marxist'. It is Marxist with all the old anarchist criticisms taken to heart. This can be seen in number of ways.

First of all, the New Left's rejection of orthodox communism as a corrupt and bureaucratic tyranny reflected the old anarchist fears of the idea of a 'dictatorship of the proletariat', that were borne out in the experience of modern communism. The modern bureaucratic state was almost as much an object of hatred as the ruling class. There was no national or international leadership and no attempt was made at creating a disciplined party; reliance was placed upon a network of independent democratic groups.

Second, the New Left rejected Marx's economic determinism and the whole emphasis on the working out of historical necessity. Third, the idea of the proletariat as the instrument of revolution was abandoned in favour of, as Bakunin wanted, the oppressed and disillusioned, the more prosperous working class having, to a considerable extent, been bought off (more so in the age of consumerism). Finally, the New Left emphasis was on revolt now, leading to liberation now, and a new society now, all based on a transformation of consciousness, and not the juggernaught of historical inevitability being played out in the fullness of time, independent of anyone's will.

Part of the whole student-New Left ethos of the 1960s was the rejection, not just of the power-structure of class and state but the whole consumer culture and bourgeois values of mainstream America. Part of the New Left revolt was a rebellion among the young who sought to revolutionise everyday life, to create alternative ways of living. This led to what is called the 'counter-culture',

Finally, the notion of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' was anathema. The means must be consistent with the end. Revolutions must be accomplished in accordance with the same values they are intended realise. To create a tyranny in order to end all tyranny was absurd.

Marxists tended to reply that the anarchists were so disorganised, they would never achieve anything. Nevertheless, despite the rivalry Marxism and anarchism had much in common. They were both equally hostile to capitalism and the bourgeois state. Marx believed that the state was an instrument of class oppression, and that in the future classless society the state would necessarily cease to exist. Thus, Marx's ultimate future (to the very limited extent that he outlined it) was an anarchist one.

Until the First World War, the anarchists were the only serious revolutionary rivals to the Marxists, although only in a few places of equal importance. But, Spain apart, the anarchist movement collapsed after the war. There were several reasons for this, but one was the success of the Bolshevic Revolution, which seemed to show the true and effective way of accomplishing a revolution. In fact the anarchists, both within Russia and elsewhere, were the Bolshevic's severest critics on the left. Indeed, as time went on anarchists were increasingly clear that all their criticisms and suspicions of Marxism had been well founded, and that the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' had turned into the monstrous tyranny they had predicted. Their prescience did not, however, prevent the demise of anarchism as a mass movement.

Anarchism and the New Left

The New Left was a remarkably disorganised and inchoate movement, with no overall organisation and no clear goals. Its theory was fluid and eclectic. Marx and Marxists were the most important figures, but psychoanalysts, psychiatrists, phenomenologists and various cultural critics also contributed. Anarchism was

change in the mainstream of anarchist thought from individualism to collectivism.

But although committed to socialist ideals, Bakunin was an implacable opponent of Karl Marx, whose ideas he believed were inherently authoritarian. Although far less original and far less of a systematic thinker than Marx, his criticisms were prophetic, and were later influential among the New Left Marxists of the 1960s.

Tolstoy

After Bakunin the next two significant anarchist thinkers were, oddly enough, also Russian aristocrats. One was Count Leo Tolstoy (1828–1910), the great Russian novelist. Unlike any of the previous thinkers he was a Christian anarchist. After a life of worldly success and worldly pleasure he renounced cultivated society and his art, and tried to live a simple life close to the Russian peasantry.

Tolstoy was a savage critic of contemporary society as being based on corruption, hypocrisy and false knowledge. Science, he believed, taught us nothing of any significance, and he was scornful of the modern world's belief in progress. He rejected all state and social institutions and all organised religion. The honest simple life that was close to the soil and within the family was the source of wisdom and goodness and constituted the best life for man. Tolstoy was a pacifist, believing all forms of violence to be immoral, and consequently did not believe in revolutions. The thing to do, he said, was not to plot and plan for the good society, but to go out and start living the good life.

Kropotkin

The last of the major theorists, who built on the ideas of Proudhon and Bakunin, was Prince Peter Kropotkin (1842–1941), a distinguished Russian scientist and geographer. After a period in the Imperial army followed by scientific work in Siberia, Kropotkin vis-

ited Switzerland in 1872 where he was converted to anarchism by some of Bakunin's followers. After returning to Russia he began to promote the anarchist cause, but ended up in prison. He later escaped and spent most of the rest of his life in exile, mainly in London. He returned briefly to Russia before he died, but had little sympathy for the Soviet regime.

Kropotkin was the most thorough and systematic of anarchist thinkers and devoted several books to trying to put anarchism on a firm scientific basis. In the late nineteenth century the scientific theory that caught every imagination was Darwin's theory of evolution. Many social theorists attempted to use evolution as a basis of the own social and political ideas. They were known as 'social Darwinists': the best known was Herbert Spencer who used evolution to justify extreme *laissez-faire* capitalism as natural and right, in the sense that free competition ensures the 'survival of the fittest', thereby promoting higher evolution and progress. But instead of glorifying competition, as did most social Darwinists, Kropotkin took precisely the opposite view by arguing that co-operation was the key to evolutionary success. Human beings were the most successful species because they had learnt to co-operate together effectively.

It is not competition, therefore, that is natural and good, but social co-operation and mutuality. The obvious conclusion to be drawn from this, Kropotkin believed, was that the ultimate stage in the evolution of human society was a social life where people freely and naturally co-operated on equal terms, and competition no longer existed. However, man's natural sociability and co-operativeness were obscured and distorted by capitalism and the coercive state. Once these have been removed, by whatever means, human society would be free to achieve its highest stage of development, which was communist anarchism. Society would then be based on a free association of communes, where goods would be produced and distributed on the basis of need (as in Marx) and not labour time (as in Bakunin).

to form centralised and disciplined mass parties co-ordinated by an international body led by Marx himself. But Bakunin and other anarchists would have none of this. They were against disciplined parties and intellectual elites possessed of the 'truth'. They thought Marx's theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat implied a post-revolutionary tyranny not much better than what it replaced.

Anarchists objected to the whole notion of 'scientific socialism', with its economic determinism and its necessary stages of history, which seemed to suggest that it would all happen automatically anyway. This must, they argued, undermine the revolutionary fervour necessary to overthrow the system. Revolutions were about will and leadership and courage, not about having the correct analysis. Besides, if it was all scientific, that implied a class of experts to run not only the revolutionary party but the post-revolutionary world: only they would know the right moment to act and the right thing to do; they would constitute a new and permanent priesthood.

Another objection was to the role of the proletariat. Marx saw the revolution being undertaken by an army of disciplined urban factory workers. But the anarchists did not believe the working class was the solidly united force Marxists believed. The top strata were reasonably prosperous and unlikely to participate in revolutionary activity, let alone lead it. Much more likely material, anarchists believed, was the lower strata, the most exploited, the unemployed, the poor, as well as landless peasants and other groups. Furthermore, apart from regarding the whole notion of a post-revolutionary dictatorship as inherently wrong, it was completely unacceptable that it should be in the hands of one narrowly defined social group and not all the oppressed. At best it would rule in the interests of that narrow class and suppress the spontaneity and creativity of the whole society released by the revolution.

belonged to anarcho-syndicalist-dominated unions, and even in America the anarcho-syndicalist union, the International Workers of the World (the 'Wobblies'), had over 200,000 members.

After the war the influence of anarcho-syndicalism waned in most countries. The exception was Spain, where it went on growing as a mass movement and played an important role in the Spanish Civil War. The anarchist trade union, the Confederacion Nacional de Trabajo, in the mid-1930s achieved a membership of over one million, and fleetingly controlled large parts of Spain. But with Franco's victory the anarchist tradition more or less died out.

Since then, however, it has not been a significant political movement anywhere in the world in terms of mass politics, although anarchist theorising has continued along several paths. There was something of a revival of anarchist ideas among the student left of the 1960s, although mainly on the fringes of the New Left which was dominated by neo-Marxism. More recently there has been the development of 'green anarchism' and 'anarcho-capitalism'.

Anarchism and Marxism

Curiously, Marx knew well all the leading anarchist thinkers in Europe in his lifetime. Stirner was, for a time, a fellow Young Hegelian in Berlin. When Marx first went into exile in Paris he was on friendly terms with Proudhon, although this subsequently turned to hostility. Finally, it was Bakunin who led the anarchist faction in the First International and was Marx's chief opponent. In the second half of the nineteenth century, and up to the First World War, support for the revolutionary left was divided between Marxists and anarchists.

Differences and similarities

Proudhon and Bakunin objected to Marx's authoritarianism, both organisational and intellectual. Marx wanted the workers

Anarchist terrorism

In the two decades prior to 1914 the Western world was shocked by a series of anarchist outrages. Bombs were thrown into parliamentary assemblies, and into theatres and restaurants where the rich gathered; policemen, judges and other public officials were murdered; most shocking of all was a series of spectacular assassinations, including those of President Carnot of France (1894), Empress Elizabeth of Austria (1898), King Umberto of Italy (1900) and President McKinley of the USA (1901).

The press and the politicians usually portrayed these atrocities as the work of the Anarchist International (or 'Black International'), a vast international conspiracy aimed at destroying Western civilisation. In fact there was no such conspiracy and no such organisation. All these sensational acts were committed by individuals, or very small groups, working alone. Their own justification was that they were striking a blow for the oppressed. The state and the capitalist system constituted organised violence against the people, and terrorism was their only way of fighting back. An assassination was not so much an attempt to overthrow the system directly (though there was always the hope that it would spark off a popular uprising). It was, rather, a symbolic act that would reveal to the masses the true nature of the system and convince them that action to change things was possible. It was, in the anarchist phrase, 'propaganda of the deed'. Many moderate anarchists, like Kropotkin, were appalled by these outrages, but refused to condemn them on the grounds that they were the inevitable products of an unjust society.

The idea of 'propaganda of the deed' had been developed in the 1870s as a reaction against earlier reliance on propaganda and persuasion. The oppressed, it was argued, had neither the time not the inclination to read pamphlets or attend political meetings. They had to be shown by a dramatic and symbolic act against the state and capitalist property, that would highlight their oppression and

demonstrate the way forward. What was originally envisaged were acts of insurrection, with anarchist bands moving from community to community, providing the spark that would lead on to a general uprising. The most serious attempts to implement this strategy were in northern Italy in the mid-1870s, which all came to nothing. Such failures led to a commitment to terrorism, and the expression 'propaganda of the deed' acquiring more sinister connotations.

It might be argued that 'propaganda of the deed' grew out of two other kinds of failure. One was a failure of insight. Anarchists were given to believe (as Marxists often were) that the oppressed masses were ready for revolution, and that all that was needed was the spark that would set alight a revolutionary conflagration across Europe. The resort to terrorism was a desperate attempt to find the right kind of spark, and was more successful than previous strategies. But also, anarchists seemed to be neither inclined nor capable of creating the kind of disciplined organisation their aspirations called for. Organisation based on entirely voluntary co-operation and acceptance of decisions could not be effective. The systematic application of anarchist principles to anarchist organisations appeared to condemn anarchism to impotence, even when events seemed propitious. For example, they failed to take advantage of their substantial following in Russia to resist the Bolshevics in the revolutionary period.

Anarcho-syndicalism

Most anarchists believed that the existing order needed to be overthrown by a spontaneous popular insurrection, whether or not it was sparked off by terrorism. There was, however, one strand of anarchism in this period which put its faith in economic action rather than political. This was anarcho-syndicalism (from the French *syndicats* = trade unions), which has been the nearest the anarchists have come to creating a serious political mass movement capable of challenging for power in a modern society.

Syndicalist theory developed in France, and is essentially revolutionary trade unionism. Syndicalism was about class war, using whatever was necessary by way of direct action — strikes, boycotts, sabotage and, where necessary, personal violence — to fight for better conditions and prepare the workers for the revolutionary general strike that would finally cripple and destroy the capitalist system. The syndicalists were deeply suspicious of party politics, and saw the emancipation of the working class as something to be achieved by the working class themselves, and by means of their own institutions.

Syndicates were local trade unions, normally based on an industry, although sometimes a craft or profession. They were under the democratic control of their members and entirely autonomous, and in syndicalist theory must remain so. There must be strong links with other local syndicates, and with a national organisation for each industry. But these wider organisationswere only for purposes of co-ordination. Each local syndicate was sovereign, and joined these wider organisations and took part in common action on a purely voluntary basis.

Not all syndicalist leaders were thoroughgoing anarchists. For some the main object was destroying capitalism, and the abolition of the state was a minor matter to be settled when that object was achieved. But most were anarcho-syndicalists who did see the stateless society as central to the ideal. The state was not only undesirable but unnecessary, since the federation of syndicates, freely co-operating in the interests of all, would not only create the revolution but were perfectly adequate for running the post-revolutionary world without the need for the state apparatus of oppression. (However, it must be said that revolutionary fervour was confined to a minority.)

Although it never made much impact in Britain, anarcho-syndicalism became a major political movement in France, Italy and Spain. In the years before the First World War it was a serious rival to socialism and Marxism. In France, half the workforce