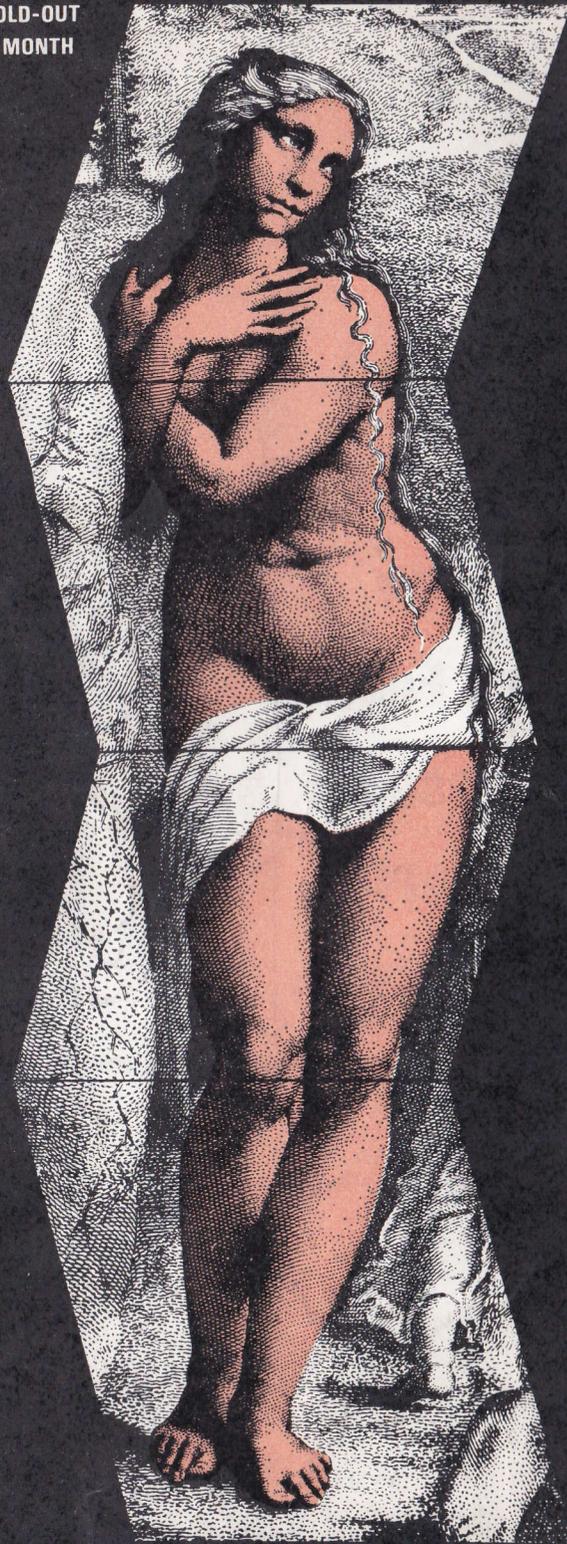


ANARCHY 69'S FOLD-OUT
COMRADE OF THE MONTH



ANARCHY 69 IS ABOUT ECOLOGY

A6756
TWO SHILLINGS OR THIRTY CENTS



Contents of No. 69

November 1966

Ecology and revolutionary thought	<i>Lewis Herber</i>	321
The ecological outlook	<i>D. M. C. MacEwan</i>	341
Voluntarism and politics	<i>Frank Lindenfeld</i>	344
The "problem" of abortion	<i>M. I. Finesilver</i>	350
Cover by	<i>Rufus Segar</i>	

Other issues of ANARCHY

VOLUME 1, 1961: 1. Sex-and-Violence, Galbraith*; 2. Workers' control†; 3. What does anarchism mean today?; 4. Deinstitutionalisation; 5. Spain 1936†; 6. Cinema†; 7. Adventure playgrounds†; 8. Anthropology; 9. Prison; 10. MacInnes, Industrial decentralisation.

VOLUME 2, 1962: 11. Paul Goodman, A. S. Neill; 12. Who are the anarchists?; 13. Direct action*; 14. Disobedience*; 15. The work of David Wills; 16. Ethics of anarchism, Africa; 17. Towards a lumpenproletariat; 18. Comprehensive schools; 19. Theatre: anger and anarchy; 20. Non-violence, Freud; 21. Secondary modern; 22. Cranston's dialogue on anarchy.

VOLUME 3, 1963: 23. Housing, squatters, do-it-yourself; 24. Community of Scholars; 25. Technology, cybernetics; 26. CND, Salesmanship, Thoreau; 27. Youth; 28. The future of anarchism; 29. The Spies for Peace Story; 30. The community workshop; 31. Self-organising systems, Beatniks, the State; 32. Crime; 33. Alex Comfort's anarchism†; 34. Science fiction, Workless teens.

VOLUME 4, 1964: 35. House and home; 36. Arms of the law; 37. Why I won't vote; 38. Nottingham*; 39. Homer Lane; 40. Unions and workers' control; 41. The land; 42. Indian anarchism; 43. Parents and teachers; 44. Transport; 45. Anarchism and Greek thought; 46. Anarchism and the historians.

VOLUME 5, 1965: 47. Towards freedom in work; 48. Lord of the flies; 49. Automation; 50. The anarchist outlook; 51. Blues, R'n'b, Pop, Folk; 52. Limits of pacifism; 53. After school; 54. Buber, Landauer, Muhsam; 55. Mutual aid; 56. Women; 57. Law; 58. Stateless societies, homelessness.

VOLUME 6, 1966: 59. The white problem; 60. Drugs; 61. Creative vandalism; 62. Organisation; 63. Voluntary servitude; 64. Mis-spent youth; 65. Derevolutionisation; 66. Provo; 67. USA.

PLEASE NOTE: Issues 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 13, 14, 33 and 38 are out of print.

Subscribe to ANARCHY

Single copies 2s. (30c.). Annual Subscription (12 issues) 26s. (\$3.50). By airmail 47s. (\$7.00). Joint annual subscription with FREEDOM the anarchist weekly (which readers of ANARCHY will find indispensable) 42s. (\$6.00). Cheques, P.O.s and Money Orders should be made out to FREEDOM PRESS, 17a Maxwell Road, London, S.W.6, England. Tel.: RENown 3736.

Ecology and revolutionary thought

LEWIS HERBER

IN ALMOST EVERY PERIOD SINCE THE RENAISSANCE, the development of revolutionary thought has been heavily influenced by a branch of science, often in conjunction with a school of philosophy.

Astronomy in the time of Copernicus and Galileo helped to guide a sweeping movement of ideas from the medieval world, riddled by superstition, into one pervaded by a critical rationalism, openly naturalistic and humanistic in outlook. During the Enlightenment—the era that culminated in the Great French Revolution—this liberatory movement of ideas was reinforced by advances in mechanics and mathematics. The Victorian Era was shaken to its very foundations by evolutionary theories in biology and anthropology, by Marx's re-working of Ricardian economics, and towards its end, by Freudian psychology.

In our own time, we have seen the assimilation of these once liberatory sciences by the established social order. Indeed, we have begun to regard science itself as an instrument of control over the thought processes and physical being of man. This distrust of science and of the scientific method is not without justification. "Many sensitive people, especially artists", observes Abraham Maslow, "are afraid that science besmirches and depresses, that it tears things apart rather than integrating them, thereby killing rather than creating." What is perhaps equally important, modern science has lost its critical edge. Largely functional or instrumental in intent, the branches of science that once tore at the chains of man are now used to perpetuate and gild them. Even philosophy has yielded to instrumentalism and tends to be little more than a body of logical contrivances, the handmaiden of the computer rather than the revolutionary.

There is one science, however, that may yet restore and even transcend the liberatory estate of the traditional sciences and philosophies. It passes rather loosely under the name of "ecology"—a term coined by Haeckel a century ago to denote "the investigation of the total relations of the animal both to its inorganic and to its organic

LEWIS HERBER is a New York anarchist.

6756

environment". At first glance, Haeckel's definition sounds innocuous enough; and ecology, narrowly conceived as one of the biological sciences, is often reduced to a variety of biometrics in which field workers focus on food chains and statistical studies of animal populations. There is an ecology of health that would hardly offend the sensibilities of the American Medical Association and a concept of social ecology that would conform to the most well-engineered notions of the New York City Planning Commission.

Broadly conceived, however, ecology deals with the balance of nature. Inasmuch as nature includes man, the science basically deals with the harmonization of nature and man. This focus has explosive implications. The explosive implications of an ecological approach arise not only from the fact that ecology is intrinsically a critical science—in fact, critical on a scale that the most radical systems of political economy failed to attain—but it is also an integrative and reconstructive science. This integrative, reconstructive aspect of ecology, carried through to all its implications, leads directly into anarchic areas of social thought. For in the final analysis, it is impossible to achieve a harmonization of man and nature without creating a human community that lives in a lasting balance with its natural environment.

THE CRITICAL NATURE OF ECOLOGY

Let us examine the critical edge of ecology—a unique feature of the science in a period of general scientific docility.

Basically, this critical edge derives from the subject-matter of ecology—from its very domain. The issues with which ecology deals are imperishable in the sense that they cannot be ignored without bringing into question the viability of the planet, indeed the survival of man himself. The critical edge of ecology is due not so much to the power of human reason—a power which science hallowed during its most revolutionary periods—but to a still higher power, the sovereignty of nature over man and all his activities. It may be that man is manipulable, as the owners of the mass media argue, or that elements of nature are manipulable, as the engineers demonstrate by their dazzling achievements, but ecology clearly shows that the *totality* of the natural world—nature taken in *all* its aspects, cycles, and inter-relationships—cancels out all human pretensions to mastery over the planet. The great wastelands of North Africa and the eroded hills of Greece, once areas of a thriving agriculture or a rich natural flora, are historic evidence of nature's revenge against human parasitism, be it in the form of soil exploitation or deforestation.

Yet none of these historical examples compare in weight and scope with the effects of man's despoilation—and nature's revenge—since the days of the Industrial Revolution, and especially since the end of the Second World War. Ancient examples of human parasitism were essentially local in scope; they were precisely *examples* of man's potential for destruction and nothing more. Often, they were compensated by remarkable improvements in the natural ecology of a region, as witness the European peasantry's superb reworking of the

soil during centuries of cultivation and the even more superb achievements of Inca agriculturists in terracing the Andes Mountains during pre-Columbian times.

Modern man's despoilation of the environment is global in scope, like his imperialisms. It is even extra-terrestrial, as witness the disturbances of the Van Allen Belt a few years ago. Human parasitism, today, disrupts not only the atmosphere, climate, water resources, soil, flora, and fauna of a region; it upsets virtually all the basic cycles of nature and threatens to undermine the stability of the environment on a world-wide scale.

To gauge the scope of modern man's disruptive role: it has been estimated that the burning of fossil fuels (coal and oil) annually adds 600 million tons of carbon dioxide to the air, an average of about .03 per cent of the total atmospheric mass—this, I may add, aside from an incalculable quantity of toxicants. Since the Industrial Revolution, the overall atmospheric mass of carbon dioxide has increased by 13 per cent over earlier, more stable, levels. It could be argued on very sound theoretical grounds that this mounting blanket of carbon dioxide, by intercepting heat radiated from the earth into outer space, leads to rising atmospheric temperatures, to a more violent circulation of air, to more destructive storm patterns, and eventually, it will lead to a melting of the polar ice caps (possibly in two or three centuries), rising sea levels, and the inundation of vast land areas. Far removed as such a deluge may be, the changing proportion of carbon dioxide to other atmospheric gases is symbolic of the impact man is having on the balance of nature.

A more immediate ecological issue is man's extensive pollution of the earth's waterways. What counts, here, is not the fact that man befouls a given stream, river, or lake—a thing he has done for ages—but rather the magnitude water pollution has reached in the past two generations.

Nearly all the surface waters of the United States are polluted. Many American waterways are open cesspools that properly qualify as extensions of urban sewage systems. It would be a euphemism to describe them any longer as rivers or lakes. More significantly, large portions of groundwater are sufficiently polluted to be undrinkable, even medically hazardous, and a number of local hepatitis epidemics have been traced to polluted wells in suburban areas. In contrast to surface-water pollution, groundwater or sub-surface-water pollution is immensely difficult to eliminate and tends to linger on for decades after the sources of pollution have been removed.

An article in a mass-circulation magazine appropriately describes the polluted waterways of the United States as "Our Dying Waters". This despairing, apocalyptic description of the water-pollution problem in the United States really applies to the world at large. The waters of the earth, conceived as factors in a large ecological system, are literally dying. Massive pollution is destroying the once pristine rivers and lakes of Africa, Asia, and Latin America as media of life, as well as the long-abused waterways of highly industrialized continents. Even

the open sea has not been spared from extensive pollution. And I speak, here, not only of radioactive pollutants from nuclear bomb tests and power reactors, which apparently reach all the flora and fauna of the sea. It suffices to point out that the discharge of diesel-oil wastes from ships in the Atlantic has become a massive pollution problem, claiming marine life in enormous numbers every year.

Accounts of this kind can be repeated for virtually every part of the biosphere. Pages can be written on the immense losses of productive soil that occur annually in almost every continent of the earth; on the extensive loss of the tree cover in areas vulnerable to erosion; on lethal air-pollution episodes in major urban areas; on the worldwide distribution of toxic agents, such as radioactive isotopes and lead; on the chemicalization of man's immediate environment—one might say his very dinner table—with pesticide residues and food additives. Pieced together like bits of a jig-saw puzzle, these affronts to the environment form a pattern of destruction that has no precedent in man's long history on the earth.

Obviously, man would be dismissed as a highly destructive parasite, who threatens to destroy his host—the natural world—and eventually himself. In ecology, however, the word "parasite", used in this over-simplified sense, is not an answer to a question, but comprises the question itself. Ecologists know that a destructive parasitism of this kind usually reflects a disruption of an ecological situation; indeed, many species, seemingly highly destructive under one set of conditions, are eminently useful under another set of conditions. What imparts a profoundly critical function to ecology is the fact that man's destructive activities raises the question: What are the conditions that have turned man into a destructive parasite? What produces a form of human parasitism that results not only in vast natural imbalances, but also threatens the very existence of humanity itself?

The truth is that man has produced imbalances not only in nature, but more fundamentally, in his relations with his fellow man—in the very structure of his society. To state this thought more precisely: The imbalances man has produced in the natural world are caused by the imbalances he has produced in the social world. A century ago it would have been possible to regard air pollution and water contamination as the result of greed, profit-seeking, and competition—in short, as the result of the activities of industrial barons and self-seeking bureaucrats. Today, this explanation would be a gross oversimplification. It is doubtless true that most bourgeois enterprises are still guided by a public-be-damned attitude, as witness the reactions of power utilities, automobile concerns, and steel corporations to pollution problems. But a more deep-rooted problem than the attitude of the owners is the size of the firms themselves—their enormous physical proportions, their location in a region, their density with respect to a community or a waterway, their requirements for raw materials and water, and their role in the national division of labour.

What we are seeing, today, is a crisis not only in natural ecology but, above all, in social ecology. Modern society, especially as we

know it in the United States and Europe, is being organized around immense urban belts at one extreme, a highly industrialized agriculture at the other extreme, and capping both, a swollen, bureaucratized, anonymous state apparatus. If we leave all values aside, for the moment, and examine the physical structure of this society, what must necessarily impress us is the incredible logistical problems it must try to solve—problems of transportation, of density, of supply (raw materials, manufactured commodities, and foodstuffs), of economic and political organization, of industrial location, and so forth. The burden this type of urbanized and centralized society places on any continental area is enormous. If the process of urbanizing man and industrializing agriculture were to continue unabated, it would make much of the earth inhospitable for viable, healthy human beings and render vast areas utterly uninhabitable.

Ecologists are often asked, rather tauntingly, to locate with scientific exactness the ecological breaking point of nature—presumably, the point at which the natural world will cave in on man. This is equivalent to asking a psychiatrist for the precise moment when a neurotic will become a non-functional psychotic. No such answer is ever likely to be available. But the ecologist can supply a strategic insight into the directions man seems to be following as a result of his split with the natural world.

From the standpoint of ecology, man is dangerously simplifying his environment. The modern city represents a regressive encroachment of the synthetic on the natural, of the inorganic (concrete, metals, and glass) on the organic, of crude, elemental stimuli on variegated, wide-ranging ones. The vast urban belts now developing in industrialized areas of the world are not only grossly offensive to eye and ear, but they are becoming chronically smog-ridden, noisy, and virtually immobilized by congestion. This process of simplifying man's environment and rendering it increasingly elemental and crude has a cultural as well as a physical dimension. The need to manipulate immense urban populations—to transport, feed, employ, educate, and somehow entertain millions of densely concentrated people daily—leads to a crucial decline in civic and social standards. A mass concept of human relations—totalitarian, centralistic, and regimented in orientation—tends to dominate the more individuated concepts of the past. Bureaucratic techniques of social management tend to replace humanistic approaches. All that is spontaneous, creative, and individuated is circumscribed by the standardized, the regulated, and the massified. The space of the individual is steadily narrowed by restrictions imposed upon him by a faceless, impersonal social apparatus. Any recognition of unique personal qualities is increasingly surrendered to the needs—more precisely, the manipulation—of the group, indeed, of the lowest common denominator of the mass. A quantitative, statistical approach, a beehive manner of dealing with man, tends to triumph over that precious, individualized-qualities approach which places its strongest emphasis on personal uniqueness, free expression, and cultural complexity.

The same regressive simplification of the environment occurs in modern agriculture.* The manipulated people in modern cities must be fed, and to feed them involves an extension of industrial farming. Food plants must be cultivated in a manner that allows for a high degree of mechanization—not to reduce human toil but to increase productivity, efficiency, maximize investments, exploit the biosphere. Accordingly the terrain must be reduced to a flat plain—to a factory floor, if you will—and natural variations in topography must be diminished as much as possible. Plant growth must be closely regulated to meet the tight schedules of food-processing plants. Ploughing, soil fertilization, sowing, and harvesting must be handled on a mass scale, often in total disregard of the natural ecology of an area. Large areas of the land must be used to cultivate a single crop, a form of plantation agriculture that not only lends itself to mechanization but also to pest infestation—a single crop being the ideal environment for the proliferation of individual pest species. Finally, chemical agents must be used lavishly to deal with the problems created by insects, weeds, plant diseases; to regulate crop production and maximize soil exploitation. The real symbol of agriculture is not the sickle or, for that matter, the tractor, but the aeroplane. The modern food cultivator is represented not by the peasant, yeoman, or even the agronomist—men who could be expected to have an intimate relationship with the unique qualities of the land on which they grow crops—but the pilot and chemist, for whom soil is a mere resource, an inorganic raw material.

The simplification process is carried still further by an exaggerated regional, indeed a national division of labour. Immense areas of the planet are increasingly reserved for specific industrial tasks or reduced to depots of raw materials. Others are turned into centres of urban population, largely occupied with commerce and trade. Cities and regions, in fact countries and continents, are specifically identified with special products—Pittsburgh, Cleveland, and Youngstown with steel, New York with finance, Bolivia with tin, Arabia with oil, Europe and America with industrial goods, and the rest of the world with raw materials of one kind or another. The complex ecosystems which make up the regions of a continent are submerged, in effect, by an organization of entire nations into economically rationalized entities, each a way-station in a vast industrial belt system, global in its dimensions. By the same token, it is only a matter of time before the most attractive areas of the countryside will succumb to the concrete mixer, just as most of the Eastern seashore areas of the United States have already succumbed to subdividers and bungalows. What

*For an insight into this problem, I wish to urge the reader to consult *The Ecology of Invasions* by Charles S. Elton (John Wiley & Sons, New York; 1958), *Soil and Civilization* by Edward Hyams (Thames & Hudson, London; 1952), *Our Synthetic Environment* by Lewis Herber (Knopf, New York; 1962), and a re-reading of *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson—the last to be read not so much as a diatribe against pesticides but as a plea for ecological diversification.

will remain in the way of natural beauty will be debased by trailer lots, canvas slums, “scenic” highways, motels, food stalls, and the oil slicks of motor boats.

The point is that man is literally undoing the work of organic evolution. By creating vast urban agglomerations of concrete, metal, and glass, by overriding and undermining the complex, often subtly organized ecosystems that constitute local differences in the natural world—in short, by replacing a highly complex, organic environment by a simplified, inorganic one—man is disassembling the biotic pyramid that supported humanity for countless millennia. In the course of replacing the complex ecological relationships on which all advanced living things depend for more elementary relationships, man is steadily restoring the biosphere to a stage which will be able to support only simpler forms of life. If this great reversal of the evolutionary process continues, it is by no means fanciful to suppose that the preconditions for higher forms of life will be irreparably destroyed and the earth will be incapable of supporting man himself.

Ecology derives its critical edge not only from the fact that it alone, among all the sciences, presents this awesome message to humanity, but because it also presents this message in a new social dimension. From an ecological viewpoint, the reversal of organic evolution is the result of appalling contradictions between town and country, state and community, industry and husbandry, mass manufacture and craftsmanship, centralism and regionalism, the bureaucratic scale and the human scale.

THE RECONSTRUCTIVE NATURE OF ECOLOGY

Until recently, attempts to resolve the contradictions created by urbanization, centralization, bureaucratic growth, and statification were viewed as a vain counterdrift to “progress”—a counterdrift that, at best, could be dismissed as chimerical and, at worst, reactionary. The anarchist was regarded as a forlorn visionary, a social outcast, filled with nostalgia for the peasant village or the medieval commune. His yearnings for a decentralized society, for a humanistic community at one with nature and the needs of the individual—spontaneous and unfettered by authority—were viewed as the reactions of a romantic, of a declassed craftsman or an intellectual “misfit”. His protest against centralization and statification seemed all the less persuasive because it was supported primarily by ethical considerations, by utopian, ostensibly “unrealistic” notions of what man could be, not what he was. To this protest, opponents of anarchist thought—liberals, rightists, and authoritarian “leftists”—argued that they were the voices of historic reality, that their statist, centralist, and political notions were rooted in the objective, practical world.

Time is not very kind to the conflict of ideas. Whatever may have been the validity of libertarian and non-libertarian views a few generations ago, historical development has rendered virtually all objections to anarchist thought meaningless today. The modern city and state, the massive coal-steel technology of the Industrial Revo-

lution, the later, more rationalized systems of mass production and assembly-line systems of labour organization, the centralized nation, the state and its bureaucratic apparatus—all, have reached their limits. Whatever progressive or liberatory role they may have possessed has clearly become entirely regressive and oppressive. They are regressive not only because they erode the human spirit and drain the community of all its cohesive, solidarity, and ethico-cultural standards; they are regressive from an objective standpoint, from an ecological standpoint. For they undermine not only the human spirit and the human community but also the viability of the planet and all living things on it.

What I am trying to say—and it cannot be emphasized too strongly—is that the anarchist concept of a balanced community, a face-to-face democracy, a humanistic technology, and a decentralized society—these rich libertarian concepts are not only desirable but they are also necessary. They belong not only to the great visions of man's future but they now constitute the preconditions for human survival. The process of social development has carried them from an ethical, subjective dimension into a practical, objective dimension. What was once regarded as impractical and visionary has now become eminently practical. And what was once regarded as practical and objective has become eminently impractical and irrelevant in terms of man's development towards a fuller, unfettered existence. If community, face-to-face democracy, a humanistic, liberatory technology, and decentralization are conceived of merely as reactions to the prevailing state of affairs—a vigorous “nay” to the “yea” of what exists today—a compelling, objective case can now be made for the practicality of an anarchist society.

This reflex-like reaction, this rejection of the prevailing state of affairs accounts, I think, for the explosive growth of intuitive anarchism among young people today. Their love of nature is a reaction against the highly synthetic qualities of our urban environment and its shabby products. Their informality of dress and manners is a reaction against the formalized, standardized nature of modern institutionalized living. Their predisposition for direct action is a reaction against the bureaucratization and centralization of society. Their tendency to drop out, to avoid toil and the rat-race reflects a growing anger towards the mindless industrial routine bred by modern mass manufacture, be it in the factory, office, or university. Their intense individualism is, in its own elemental way, a *de facto* decentralization of social life—a personal abdication from the demands of a mass society.

What is most significant about ecology is its ability to convert this rejection of the *status quo*, often nihilistic in character, into an emphatic affirmation of life—indeed, into a reconstructive credo for a humanistic society. The essence of ecology's reconstructive message can be summed up in the word “diversity”. From an ecological viewpoint, balance and harmony in nature, in society, and by inference, in behaviour, is achieved not by mechanical standardization, but precisely by its opposite, organic differentiation. This message can be understood

clearly only by examining its practical meaning on several levels of experience.

Let us consider the ecological principle of diversity—what Charles Elton calls the “conservation of variety”—as it applies to biology, specifically to agriculture. A number of studies—Lotka's and Volterra's mathematical models, Gause's experiments with protozoa and mites in controlled environments, and extensive field research—clearly demonstrate that fluctuations in populations, ranging from mild to pest-like proportions, depend heavily upon the number of species in an ecosystem and the degree of variety in the environment. The greater the variety of prey and predators, the more stable the population; the more diversified the environment in terms of flora and fauna, the less likely is there to be ecological instability. Complexity, variety, and diversity—choose whatever term you will—are a function of stability. If the environment is simplified and the variety of animal and plant species is reduced, fluctuations in population become marked and tend to get out of control. They tend to reach pest proportions.

In the case of pest control, many ecologists now conclude that we can avoid the repetitive use of toxic chemicals such as insecticides and herbicides by allowing for a greater interplay between living things. We must accord more room for natural spontaneity, for the diverse biological forces that make up an ecological situation. “European entomologists now speak of managing the entire plant-insect community”, observes Robert L. Rudd. “It is called manipulation of the biocenose.* The biocenetic environment is varied, complex and dynamic. Although numbers of individuals will constantly change, no one species will normally reach pest proportions. The special conditions which allow high populations of a single species in a complex ecosystem are rare events. Management of the biocenose or ecosystem should become our goal, challenging as it is.”

To “manipulate” the biocenose in a meaningful way, however, presupposes a far-reaching decentralization of agriculture. Wherever feasible, industrial agriculture must give way to soil and agricultural husbandry; the factory floor must yield to gardening and horticulture. I do not wish to imply that we must surrender the gains acquired by large-scale agriculture and mechanization. What I *do* contend, however, is that the land must be cultivated as though it were a garden—its flora diversified and carefully tended, balanced by a fauna and tree shelter appropriate to the region. Decentralization is important, moreover, not only for the development of the agricultural situation, but also for the development of the agriculturist. Food cultivation, prac-

*Rudd's use of the word “manipulation” is likely to create the erroneous impression that an ecological situation can be reduced to simple mechanical terms. Let this impression arise, I would like to emphasize that our knowledge of an ecological situation and the practical use of this knowledge is a matter of insight and understanding rather than power. Elton, I think, states the case for the management of an ecological situation when he writes: “The world's future has to be managed, but this management would not be just like a game of chess—(but) more like steering a boat.”

tised in a truly ecological sense, presupposes that the agriculturist is familiar with all the features and subtleties of the terrain on which the crops are grown. By this I mean that he must have a thorough knowledge of the physiography of the land, its variegated soils—crop land, forest land, pasture land; mineral and organic content—its microclimate, and he must be engaged in a continuing study of the effects produced by new flora and fauna. He must acquire a sensitivity to its possibilities and needs to a point where he becomes an organic part of the agricultural situation. We can hardly hope to achieve this high degree of sensitivity and integration in the food cultivator without reducing agriculture to a human scale, without bringing agriculture within the scope of the individual. To meet the demands of an ecological approach to food cultivation, agriculture must be rescaled from huge industrial farms to moderate-sized units.

The same reasoning applies to a rational development of energy resources. The Industrial Revolution increased the *quantity* of energy available to industry, but it diminished the *variety* of energy resources used by man. Although it is certainly true that pre-industrial societies relied primarily on animal power and human muscles, complex energy patterns developed in many regions of Europe, involving a subtle integration of resources such as wind and water power, and a variety of fuels (wood, peat, coal, vegetable starches, and animal fats).

The Industrial Revolution overwhelmed and largely destroyed these regional energy patterns, initially replacing them by a single energy system (coal) and later by a dual system (coal and petroleum). Regions disappeared as models of integrated energy patterns—indeed, the very concept of *integration through diversity* was obliterated. As I indicated earlier, many regions became predominantly mining areas, devoted to the extraction of a single resource, while others were turned into immense industrial areas, often devoted to the production of a few commodities. We need not review the role this breakdown in true regionalism has played in producing air and water pollution, the damage it has inflicted on large areas of the countryside, and the prospect we face in the depletion of our precious hydrocarbon fuels.

We can, of course, turn to nuclear fuels. Conceived as a single-energy-resource, it is chilling to think of the lethal radioactive wastes that would require disposal as power reactors replace conventional fuel systems. Eventually, an energy system based on radioactive materials would lead to the widespread contamination of the environment—at first, in a subtle form, but later on a massive and palpably destructive scale.

Or we could apply ecological principles to the solution of our energy problems. We could try to re-establish earlier regional energy patterns—a combined system of energy provided by wind, water, and solar power. But today we would be aided by more sophisticated devices than any known in the past. We have now designed wind turbines that could supply electricity in a number of mountainous areas to meet the electric-power needs of a community of 50,000 people. We have perfected solar-energy devices that yield temperatures high

enough in our warmer latitudes to deal with most metallurgical problems. Used in conjunction with heat pumps, many solar devices could provide as much as three-quarters—if not all—of the heat required to comfortably maintain a small family house. And at this writing the French are completing a tidal dam at the mouth of the Rance River in Brittany that is expected to produce more than 500 million kilowatt-hours of electricity a year. In time, the Rance River project will meet most of the electrical needs of northern France.*

Solar devices, wind turbines, and hydro-electric resources—each, taken singly, does not provide a solution for our energy problems and the ecological disruption created by conventional fuels. Pieced together as a mosaic, more precisely, as an organic energy pattern *developed from the potentialities of a region*, they could amply meet the needs of a decentralized society. In warm, sunny latitudes, we could rely more heavily on solar energy than on combustible fuels. In areas marked by atmospheric turbulence, we could rely more heavily on wind devices, and in suitable coastal areas or inland regions with a good network of rivers, the greater part of our energy would come from hydro-electric installations. In all cases, we would use a *mosaic* of non-combustible energy resources, filling whatever gaps develop by combustible and nuclear fuels. The point I wish to make is that by diversifying our use of energy resources, by organizing them into an ecologically balanced pattern, we could combine wind, solar, and water power in a given region to meet all the industrial and domestic needs of a community with only a minimal use of hazardous fuels. And eventually, we would sophisticate all our non-combustion energy devices to a point where all harmful sources of energy could be eliminated from the pattern.

As in the case of agriculture, however, the application of ecological principles to energy resources presupposes a far-reaching decentralization of society and a truly regional concept of social organization. To maintain a large city requires immense packages of fuel—"mountains of coal and veritable oceans of petroleum. By contrast, solar, wind, and tidal energy can reach us mainly in small packets; except for spectacular tidal dams, the new devices seldom provide more than a few thousand kilowatt-hours of electricity. It is difficult to believe that we will ever be able to design solar collectors that can furnish us with immense blocks of electric power produced by a giant steam plant; it is equally difficult to conceive of a battery of wind turbines that will provide us with enough electricity to illuminate Manhattan Island. If homes and factories are heavily concentrated, devices for using clean sources of energy will probably remain mere playthings,

*These examples are merely glimpses of the liberatory potential of little-known areas of modern technology. In a later article on the subject of modern technology and decentralization, I plan to explore the problem in much greater detail, and I propose to show that it is possible to *humanize* technology in such a way that machines will no longer appear to be the masters of men, but quite to the contrary, will enter fully into the service of man's fulfilment, both spiritually and materially.

but if urban communities are reduced in size and widely dispersed over the land, there is no reason why these devices cannot be combined to provide us with all the amenities of an industrialized civilization. To use solar, wind and tidal power effectively, the megalopolis must be decentralized. A new type of community, carefully tailored to the characteristics and resources of a region, must replace the sprawling urban belts that are emerging today.”*

An objective case for decentralization, to be sure, does not end with a discussion of agriculture and the problems created by combustible energy resources. The validity of the decentralist case can be demonstrated for nearly all the “logistical” problems of our time. At the risk of being cursory, let me cite an example from a problematic area such as transportation. A great deal has been written quite recently about the harmful effects of petrol-driven motor vehicles—their wastefulness, their role in urban air pollution, the noise they contribute to the city environment, the enormous death toll they claim annually in the large cities of the world and on highways. In a highly urbanized civilization, it would be meaningless to replace these noxious vehicles by clean, efficient, virtually noiseless, and certainly safer battery-powered vehicles. The best of our electric cars must be recharged about every hundred miles—a feature which limits their usefulness for transportation in large cities. In a small, decentralized community, however, it becomes eminently feasible to use these electric vehicles for intra-urban or regional transportation and establish mono-rail networks for long-distance transportation.

It is fairly well known, today, that petrol-powered vehicles contribute enormously to urban air pollution, and there is a strong sentiment to “engineer” the more noxious features of the automobile into oblivion. Our age characteristically tries to solve all its irrationalities with a gimmick—blow-by devices and after-burners for toxic petrol fumes, antibiotics for ill-health, tranquillizers for psychic disturbances. The problem of urban air pollution is more intractable than we care to believe. Basically, air pollution is caused by high population densities, by an excessive concentration of people in a small area. The fact is that millions of people, densely concentrated in a large city, necessarily produce serious *local* air pollution merely by their day-to-day activities. They must burn fuels for domestic and industrial reasons; they must construct or tear down buildings (the aerial debris produced by these activities is a major source of urban air pollution); they must dispose of immense quantities of rubbish; they must travel on roads with rubber tyres (again, the particles produced by the erosion of tyres and roadway materials adds significantly to air pollution). Quite aside from the pollution-control devices we add to automobiles and power plants, it should be fairly clear that whatever improvements these devices will produce in the quality of urban air will be more than cancelled out by future megalopolitan growth.

The social possibilities opened by decentralization could be dis-

ussed indefinitely and, in any case, there is more to anarchism than decentralized communities. If I have examined these possibilities in some detail, it has been to demonstrate that an anarchist society, far from being a remote ideal, has become a pre-condition for the practice of ecological principles. To sum up the critical message of ecology: If we diminish variety in the natural world, we debase its unity and wholeness. We destroy the forces making for natural harmony and stability, for a lasting equilibrium, and what is even more significant, we introduce an absolute retrogression in the development of the natural world, eventually rendering the environment unfit for advanced forms of life. To sum up the reconstructive message of ecology: If we wish to advance the unity and stability of the natural world, if we wish to harmonize it on ever higher levels of development, we must conserve and promote variety. To be sure, mere variety for its own sake is a vacuous goal. In nature, variety emerges spontaneously. The capacities of a new species are tested by the rigours of climate, by its ability to deal with predators, by its capacity to establish and enlarge its niche. *Yet the species that succeeds in enlarging its niche in the environment also enlarges the ecological situation as a whole.* To borrow E. A. Gutkind’s phrase, it “expands the environment”, both for itself and for the species with which it enters into a balanced relationship.*

How do these concepts apply to social theory? To many, I suppose, it should suffice to say that, inasmuch as man is part of nature, an expanding natural environment enlarges the basis for social development. But the answer to the question, I think, goes much deeper than many ecologists and libertarians suspect. Again, allow me to return to the ecological principle of wholeness and balance as a product of diversity. Keeping this principle in mind, the first step towards an answer is provided by a passage in Herbert Read’s *The Philosophy of Anarchism*. In presenting his “measure of progress”, Read observes: “Progress is measured by the degree of differentiation within a society. If the individual is a unit in a corporate mass, his life will be limited, dull, and mechanical. If the individual is a unit on his own, with space and potentiality for separate action, then he may be more subject to accident or chance, but at least he can expand and express himself. He can develop—develop in the only real meaning of the word—develop in consciousness of strength, vitality, and joy.”

Read’s thought, unfortunately, is not fully developed, but it provides an interesting point of departure for our discussion. Leaving the quotation aside, for the moment, what first strikes us is that both the ecologist and the anarchist place a strong emphasis on spontaneity. The ecologist, in so far as he is more than a technician, tends to

*I do not wish to saddle Gutkind with the notions I have advanced above, but I believe the reader would benefit enormously by reading Gutkind’s little book, a masterful discussion of communities, *The Expanding Environment* (Freedom Press).

*Lewis Herber, *Crisis in Our Cities* (Prentice-Hall Inc., New Jersey; 1965, p. 194).

reject the notion of "power" over nature. He speaks instead of "steering" his way through an ecological situation, of *managing* rather than *recreating* an ecosystem. The anarchist, in turn, speaks in terms of social spontaneity, of releasing the potentialities of society and humanity, of giving free and unfettered reign to the creativity of people. Both, in their own ways, regard authority as inhibitory, as a weight limiting the creative potential of a natural and social situation. Their object is not to *rule* a domain, but to *release* it. They regard insight, reason, and knowledge as means for fulfilling the potentialities of a situation, as facilitating the working out of the logic of a situation, not of replacing these potentialities with preconceived notions or distorting their development with dogmas.

Turning, now, to Read's words, the next thing that strikes us is that both the ecologist and anarchist view differentiation as a measure of progress. The ecologist uses the term "biotic pyramid" in speaking of biological advances; the anarchist, the word "individuation" to denote social advances. If we go beyond Read, we will observe that, to both the ecologist and anarchist, an ever-enlarging unity is achieved by growing differentiation. *An expanding whole is created by the diversification and enrichment of the parts.*

Just as the ecologist seeks to elaborate the range of an ecosystem and promote a freer interplay between species, so the anarchist seeks to elaborate the range of social experience and remove all fetters to its development. To state my point more concretely: Anarchism is not only a stateless society but also a harmonized society which exposes man to the stimuli provided by both agrarian and urban life, physical activity and mental activity, unrepressed sensuality and self-directed spirituality, communal solidarity and individual development, regional uniqueness and world-wide brotherhood, spontaneity and self-discipline, the elimination of toil and the promotion of craftsmanship. In our schizoid society, these goals are regarded as mutually exclusive dualities, sharply opposed to each other. To a large extent, they appear as dualities because of the very logistics of present-day society—the separation of town and country, the specialization of labour, the atomization of man—and it would be preposterous, I think, to believe that these dualities could be resolved without a general idea of the *physical* structure of an anarchist society. We can gain some idea of what such a society would be like by reading William Morris's *News From Nowhere* and the writings of Peter Kropotkin. But these are mere glimpses. They do not take into account the post-war developments of technology and the contributions made by the development of ecology. This is not the place to embark on "utopian writing", but certain guide lines can be presented even in a general discussion. And in presenting these guide lines, I am eager to emphasize not only the more obvious ecological premises that support them, but also the humanistic ones.

An anarchist society should be a decentralized society not only to establish a lasting basis for the harmonization of man and nature, *but also to add new dimensions to the harmonization of man and man.*

The Greeks, we are often reminded, would have been horrified by a city whose size and population precluded a personal, often familiar, relationship between citizens. However true this precept may have been in practice two thousand years ago it is singularly applicable today. There is plainly a need to reduce the dimensions of the human community—partly to solve our pollution and transportation problems, partly also to create *real* communities. In a sense, we must *humanize* humanity. There should be a minimum of electronic devices—telephones, telegraphs, radios, television receivers and computers—to mediate the relations between people. In making collective decisions—and the ancient Athenian ecclesia was, in some ways, a model for making social decisions during the classical period—all members of the community should have an opportunity to acquire in full the measure of anyone who addresses the assembly. They should be in a position to absorb his attitudes, study his expressions, weigh his motives as well as his ideas in a direct personal encounter and through full debate, face-to-face discussion and inquiry.

Our small communities should be economically balanced and well rounded, partly so that they can make full use of local raw materials and energy resources, partly also to enlarge the agricultural and industrial stimuli to which individuals are exposed. The member of a community who has a predilection for engineering, for instance, should be encouraged to steep his hands in humus; the man of ideas should be encouraged to employ his musculature; the "inborn" farmer should gain a familiarity with the workings of a rolling mill. To separate the engineer from the soil, the thinker from the spade, and the farmer from the industrial plant may well promote a degree of vocational over-specialization that would lead to a dangerous measure of social control by specialists. What is equally important, professional and vocational specialization would prevent society from achieving a vital goal: the humanization of nature by the technician and the naturalization of society by the biologist.

I submit that an anarchist community, in effect, would approximate a clearly definable ecosystem—diversified, balanced, and harmonious. It is arguable whether such an ecosystem would acquire the configuration of an urban entity with a distinct centre, such as we find in the Greek *polis* or the medieval commune, or whether, as Gutkind proposes, society would consist of widely dispersed communities without a distinct centre. In either case, the ecological scale for any of these communities would be the smallest biome capable of supporting a moderate-sized population.

A relatively self-sufficient community, visibly dependent on its environment for the means of life, would gain a new respect for the organic inter-relationships that sustain it. In the long run, the attempt to approximate self-sufficiency would, I think, prove more efficient than the prevailing system of a national division of labour. Although there would doubtless be many duplications of small industrial facilities from community to community, the familiarity of each group with its local environment and its rootedness in the area would make

for a more intelligent and more loving use of its environment. I submit that far from producing provincialism, relative self-sufficiency would create a new matrix for individual and communal development—a oneness with the surroundings that would vitalize the community.

The rotation of civic, vocational, and professional responsibilities would awaken all the senses in the being of the individual, stimulating and rounding out new dimensions in self-development. In a complete society we could hope again to create complete men; in a rounded community, rounded men. In the Western world, the Athenians, for all their shortcomings and limitations, were the first to give us a notion of this completeness. "The *polis* was made for the amateur", Kitto tells us. "Its ideal was that every citizen (more or less, according as the *polis* was democratic or oligarchic) should play his part in all of its many activities—an ideal that is recognizably descended from the generous Homeric conception of *arete* as an all-round excellence and an all-round activity. It implies a respect for the wholeness or the oneness of life, and a consequent dislike of specialization. It implies a contempt for efficiency—or rather a much higher ideal of efficiency; an efficiency which exists not in one department of life, but in life itself."* An anarchist society, although it would surely aspire for more, could hardly hope to achieve less than this state of mind.

If the foregoing attempts to mesh ecological with anarchist principles is ever achieved in practice, social life would yield a sensitive development of human and natural diversity, falling together into a well-balanced, harmonious unity. Ranging from community, through region, to entire continents, we would see a colourful differentiation of human groups and ecosystems, each developing its unique potentialities and exposing members of the community to a wide spectrum of economic, cultural, and behavioural stimuli. Falling within our purview would be an exciting, often dramatic, variety of communal forms—here, marked by architectural and industrial adaptations to semi-arid biomes, there to grasslands, elsewhere to forest lands. We would witness a dynamic interplay between individual and group, community and environment, man and nature. Freed from an oppressive routine, from paralysing repressions and insecurities, from the burdens of toil and false needs, from the trammels of authority and irrational compulsion, the individual would finally be in a position, for the first time in history, to fully realize his potentialities as a member of the human community and the natural world.

OBSERVATIONS ON "CLASSICAL" ANARCHISM AND MODERN ECOLOGY

The future of the anarchist movement will depend upon its ability to apply basic libertarian principles to new historical situations. These principles are not difficult to define—a stateless, decentralized society, based on the communal ownership of the means of production. There is also an anarchist ethic, if not methodology, which Bakunin beauti-

*H. D. F. Kitto, *The Greeks* (Aldine Publishing Company, Chicago; p. 161).

fully summarized when he said: "We cannot admit, even as a revolutionary transition, a so-called revolutionary dictatorship, because when the revolution becomes concentrated in the hands of some individuals it becomes inevitably and immediately reaction." (There is also need, I fear, for a vigorous, uncompromising article on "Taking Anarchism Seriously". There are far too many so-called "anarchists", comfortably situated in the millenarian world of bourgeois reform—and its many official and material rewards—whose notions can be regarded as mere extensions of Adam Smith. But that is a separate matter. . . .) What disquiets me, for the present, is the word "classical" as applied to anarchism, a word, fortunately, that is usually decorated by quotation marks. The word has strange connotations for a movement whose very life-blood is a fervent iconoclasm, not only with respect to authority in society at large, but in itself.

To my thinking, anarchism consists of a body of imperishable ideals which men have tried to approximate for thousands of years in all areas of the world. The context of these ideals has changed with time, although basic libertarian principles have altered very little through the course of history. It is vitally important that anarchists grasp the changing historical context in which these ideals have been applied, lest they needlessly stagnate because of the persistence of old formulas in new situations.

In the modern world, anarchism first appeared as a movement of the peasantry and yeomanry against declining feudal institutions. In Germany its foremost spokesman during the Peasant Wars was Thomas Muenzer; in England, Gerrard Winstanley, a leading participant in the Digger movement. The concepts held by Muenzer and Winstanley were superbly attuned to the needs of their time—a historical period when the majority of the population lived in the countryside and when the most militant revolutionary forces came from an agrarian world. It would be painfully academic to argue whether Muenzer or Winstanley could have achieved their ideals. What is of real importance is that they spoke to their time; their anarchist concepts followed naturally from the rural society which furnished the bands of the peasant armies in Germany and the New Model in England.

With Jacques Roux, Jean Varlet, and the Enragés of the Great French Revolution we find a re-application of substantially the same concepts held by Muenzer and Winstanley to a new historical context: Paris in 1793—a city of nearly 700,000 people, composed (as Rudé tells us) of "small shopkeepers, petty traders, craftsmen, journeymen, labourers, vagrants, and the city poor. . . ." Roux and Varlet address themselves to a basically classless people who might properly be compared with the sullen Negro masses in the Watts district of Los Angeles. Their anarchism is urbanized, so to speak; it is focused on the need to still the pangs of hunger, on the misery of the poor in the restless Graviilliers district. Their agitation tends to centre more around the cost of living than the redistribution of land, around popular control over the administration of Paris than the formation of communal brotherhoods in the countryside.

Proudhon, in his own way, probes the very vitals of this context. He speaks directly to the needs of the craftsman, whose world and values is being threatened by the Industrial Revolution. In the background of nearly all his works is the village economy of the Franche-Comte, the memories of Burgille-en-Marnay and the *tour de France* he made as a journeyman in the printing trade. A benign paterfamilias, an artisan at heart who loathed Paris ("I suffer from my exile", he wrote from Paris, "I detest Parisian civilization, . . . I shall never be able to write except on the banks of the Doubs, the Ognon and the Loue"), the fact yet remains that the very Parisians who were to "storm the heavens" in 1830, in 1848, and again in the Commune of 1871 were mainly artisans, not factory workers, and it was these men who were to adhere to Proudhon's doctrines. Again, my point is that the Proudhonian anarchists were men of their times and dealt with the problems from which stemmed most of the social unrest in France—the painful, agonizing destruction of the handicraft workers.

In the latter half of the 19th century, anarchist thought finds itself in a new historical context—a period marked by the rise of the industrial proletariat. Its most effective expression for the time is to be found less in the works of Bakunin and Kropotkin as in the less permanent articles and speeches of Christian Cornelissen, Pierre Monatte, "Big Bill" Haywood, Armondo Borghi, and Fernand Pelloutier—in short, in the anarcho-syndicalists. That many anarcho-syndicalist leaders should have drifted from anarchist notions to a reformist trade-union outlook should not surprise us; in this respect they often followed the changing mentality of the industrial working class and its growing stake in bourgeois society.

If we look back, then, we find that anarchist principles, in so far as they have been more than the personal ideas of a few isolated intellectuals, have always been clothed in a historical context. Before the Great French Revolution, anarchist doctrines rose on the full swell of peasant discontent. Between the French Revolution and the Paris Commune, the historical wave which carried these doctrines forward was artisan discontent. And between the Paris Commune of 1871 and the Spanish Revolution of 1936, anarchism—this time, together with Marxian socialism—flowed and ebbed as movements with the fortunes of the industrial proletariat.

There is still widespread peasant discontent in the world, today; indeed, the source of the most violent discontent will be found in the villages of Asia, Latin America, and Africa. There are still craftsmen whose social position is being undermined by modern technology; and there are still millions of industrial workers for whom the class struggle is a brute, immediate fact of life. Many aspects of the older anarchist programmes, sophisticated by historical experience and matured by later thinkers, doubtless still apply to many parts of the world.

But the fact remains that in the United States and in many countries of Europe, a new historical context is emerging for anarchist principles. The distinguishing features of this new context is the development of gigantic urban belts, the increasing centralization of social life into

state capitalism, the extension of automated machinery to all areas of production, the breakdown of the traditional bourgeois class structure (I refer, here, to the decline of the working class, not merely to the disappearance of the old robber barons), the use of "welfare" techniques to stifle material discontent, the ability of the bourgeoisie—more precisely, the state—to deal with economic dislocations and crises, the development of a war economy, and the re-alignment of imperialist nations around the United States—what is crudely called the Pax Americana. This new era of state capitalism which has supplanted the older era of industrial *laissez-faire* capitalism, must be dealt with earnestly and without regard to earlier precepts by the anarchist movement. To fail to meet this theoretical challenge will doom all existing movements to a lingering, burdensome stagnation.

New problems have arisen to which an ecological approach offers a more meaningful arena of discussion than the older syndicalist approach. Life itself compels the anarchist to concern himself increasingly with the quality of urban life, with the reorganization of society along humanistic lines, with the subcultures created by new, often indefinable strata—students, unemployables, an immense bohemia of intellectuals, and above all, a youth which began to gain social awareness with the peace movement and civil rights' struggles of the early 1960's. What keeps all strata and classes in a state of astonishing social mobility and insecurity is the advent of a computerized and automated technology—for it is virtually impossible to predict the vocational or professional future of most people in the Western world.

By the same token, this very technology is ripe with the promise of a truly liberated society. The anarchist movement, more so than any other, must explore this promise in depth. It must thoroughly assimilate this technology—master its development, possibilities, application, and reveal its promise in *humanistic* terms. The world is already beset with mechanical "utopias" which more closely resemble Huxley's "brave new world" and Orwell's "1984" than the organic utopias of Thomas More and William Morris—the humanistic trend in utopian thinking. Only anarchism can infuse the promise of modern technology with an organic perspective, with a man-oriented direction. Ecology provides a superb approach to the fulfilment of this historic responsibility. It is more than likely that if the anarchist movement does not take this responsibility seriously and apply itself fully to the job of translating the promise of technology into an envisionable body of guide lines, a technocratic, mechanistic approach will tend to dominate modern thinking on the future. Men will be asked to resign themselves to "improved" and gimmick-ridden versions of existing urban monstrosities, of a mass society, of a centralized, bureaucratic state. I do not believe that these monstrosities have permanence or stability; quite to the contrary, they will seethe with unrest, regress towards a new barbarism, and eventually fall before the revenge of the natural world. But social conflict will be reduced to its most elemental, brutish terms, and it is questionable indeed if mankind will be able to regain its vision of a libertarian society.

There is a fascinating dialectic in the historic process. Our age closely resembles the Renaissance, some four centuries ago. From the time of Thomas More to that of Valentin Andrae, the breakdown of feudal society produced a strange, intermediate social zone, an indefinable epoch, when old institutions were clearly in decline and new ones had not yet arisen. The human mind, freed from the burden of tradition, acquired uncanny powers of generalization and imagination. Roaming freely and spontaneously over the entire realm of experience, it produced astonishing visions, often far transcending the material limitations of the time. Entire sciences and schools of philosophy were founded in the sweep of an essay or a pamphlet. It was a time when new potentialities had replaced the old actualities, when the general, latent with new possibilities, had replaced the burdensome particulars of feudal society, when man, stripped of traditional fetters, had turned from a transfixed creature into a vital, searching being. The established feudal classes were breaking down, and with them, nearly all the values of the medieval world. A new social mobility, a restless, almost gipsy-like yearning for change, pervaded the Western world. In time, bourgeois society crystallized out of this flux, bringing with it an entirely new body of institutions, classes, values—and chains—to replace feudal civilization. But for a time, the world was loosening its shackles, and it still sought a destiny that was far less defined than we suppose today, with our retrospective “historical” attitudes. This world haunts us like an unforgettable dawn, richly tinted, ineffably beautiful, laden with the promise of birth.

Today, in the last half of the 20th century, we too are living in a period of social disintegration. The old classes are breaking down, the old values are in disintegration, the established institutions—so carefully developed by two centuries of capitalist development—are decaying before our eyes. Like our Renaissance forebears, we live in an epoch of potentialities, of generalities, and we, too, are searching, seeking a direction from the first lights on the horizon. It will no longer do, I think, to ask of anarchism that it merely free itself from 19th-century fetters and update its theories to the 20th century. In a time of such instability, every decade telescopes a generation of change under stable conditions. We must look even further, to the century that lies ahead; we cannot be extravagant enough in releasing the imagination of man.

The ecological approach

D. M. G. MacEWAN

THERE ARE TWO ATTITUDES corresponding roughly to what we may call the “technological” and the “ecological” outlook. The first regards Man as imposing his will on Nature; the second regards Man as part of Nature. The first is predominantly a city attitude. Fortunately not all city dwellers share it, or the outlook for our point of view would be a poor one. Indeed we believe many city dwellers are profoundly discontented with the quality of present-day city life.

Our attitude is ecological. We believe that life is a symbiosis, a living together of various forms, and that a balance must be maintained between these forms, of which human life is only one. This involves a limit being put on the uncontrolled expansion of mankind (which, it must be remembered, is far from being a “natural” phenomenon).

A brief summary may be given here of the problems which the population explosion brings with it.

THE MENACE TO OUR LAND

Industrial and housing developments in European nations threaten more and more to eat up the country and seashore. We welcome “Enterprise Neptune”, in its effort to save our, as yet unspoilt, coastline but believe the part of our countryside which is not National Trust property also deserves attention. Changes in farming methods threaten its character, and may be merely an example of getting a quick profit, if the countryside is permanently changed for the worse. Now that farming is tending to become more industrial in character, the utmost watchfulness is needed to see that the rural character of at least certain of our regions is maintained.

We do not accept the case for straddling the whole country with electric pylons, and think that much more money should be devoted to research on ways to avoid this. There are, in fact, various possible approaches which it would be out of place to detail here.

Dr. D. M. C. MacEWAN is secretary of the Conservation Society, and would welcome the collaboration of ecologically-minded readers with specialist knowledge. His address is 28 Abercromby Place, Edinburgh, 3.

The problem of our water resources is obviously becoming critical earlier than was anticipated, and is being tackled by a series of *ad hoc* measures which are doing damage to the countryside. The entire question of the country's water resources needs detailed planning now, taking into account the necessity for preserving our scenic treasures, but remembering that properly sited reservoirs can be an asset. Research is needed on the multiple use of water and land.

THE PROBLEM OF CONTAMINATION

A resolute war needs to be carried out against unnecessary noise, and industrial and domestic vapours and effluents. The last-mentioned can cause millions of pounds worth of damage which, because it is dispersed and does not affect the instigator, has been largely neglected in the past. This is a problem, of course, which is at last receiving attention, and we welcome this development. We intend to encourage further research and legislation on this question.

Unfortunately, to the traditional nuisances of smoke and effluents, there has now been added the wholesale distribution of powerful insecticides and herbicides—substances which can be accumulated in human tissue, as well as destroying wild life and natural beauty.

A large region around major airports is now subjected to a continual barrage of sound, and ultrasonic aircraft are likely to cause even more disturbance. We believe that research should be devoted towards silencing aircraft rather than increasing their speed. Recognition should be given to the fact that noise is a positive evil, and this should involve, at the very least, financial compensation to the affected parties.

THE PRIME FACTOR: THE POPULATION PROBLEM

The problem of human multiplication is making itself increasingly felt at the present day because of the combination of a variety of factors. First of all the conquering of many hitherto intractable diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis, has had a drastic effect in countries such as Ceylon, where the rate of increase has shot up, and is now such as to produce a doubling of the population in 25 years.

Secondly, for reasons which are difficult to define, there has been a tendency for family size to increase in the most advanced industrial societies. It is not generally known that the rate of increase in the United States is now approximately equal to that in India, and is such as to produce a doubling in about 60 years.

Thirdly the increase in leisure and in means of transport has suddenly brought us up against a problem which was latent in Victorian times, because the population, which was then more or less confined to the towns, is now able to expand all over the countryside. [This problem has not yet hit us with anything like its full force, for the immense population of Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe is still largely static, but will become increasingly mobile, and this will multiply the problem many-fold.

THE PRESSURE ON RESOURCES

What this means in practice is pressure on resources of every kind: food, water, minerals, building material, animals, sea-coast and land. Its effects are felt in devious ways, degrading and debasing the standards of life. For instance, the continual pressure for new dwellings leads to standardization of buildings and furthermore the standard adopted tends to be the cheapest compatible with weather-proofing. In these conditions, considerations of beauty and appropriateness to the surroundings tend to go by the board. The necessity for increased water supplies for growing communities leads to demands for interfering with priceless areas of natural beauty such as the Lake District of England. The growth of large cities such as London, Tokyo and New York has taken them beyond the point at which they are really viable communities, and the tendency is to become amorphous conglomerations, in which harassed commuters pass a quarter of their working time travelling amidst a barrage of noise and fumes.

There are certain countries, such as England, Japan and Ceylon which are probably absolutely over-populated at the present day. Others are in a critical state, that is to say that their problems may be soluble if the maximum effort is brought to bear to prevent further growth of the population, and to develop modern techniques in an atmosphere of calm. It should be noted that we do not mean to imply that, for instance, England and Japan will be unable to feed their population—though even now they cannot do this from their own resources, but rather that the population is excessive having regard to all the things necessary for a full and satisfying life for the individual—among which space is not the least important. The whole world desperately needs the relief which would result from a relaxation of the continual pressure of population on resources.

WHAT IS BEING DONE?

Naturally, many existing organisations are tackling these problems. The main body which is concerned with population control is the International Planned Parenthood Federation. There are also the numerous Conservation Societies, and in America the local Audubon Societies, which devote themselves to conservation of animal and plant resources. There are innumerable wild life and amenity societies.

It may seem that where there is such a wealth of societies no room exists for a new one. However one of the difficulties of the present situation is that aims are dispersed, and that problems having a common origin are tackled piecemeal. Our belief is that there is a common philosophy lying behind all these efforts, and that this common philosophy ought to have an organisation to present its aims. What is involved is a correct balance of Man with Nature. This brings in family planning—and in this sense the IPPF occupies a key position and deserves our full support. But it involves much more than this. It involves in fact a whole political programme, and one which shows up much existing political controversy as being out of date, mere shadow-boxing, with falsely conceived problems.

Voluntarism and politics

FRANK LINDENFIELD

I

THE VOLUNTARIST WANTS A SOCIETY within which human beings are free to play—in which all activities become leisure activities and in which life consists in doing the things you want to do. Instead of jobs, work as play. Instead of state coercion, voluntary co-operation. Instead of families, voluntary unions of men, women, and children. Instead of schools to which children must go, schools to which children may go if it gives them joy.

Voluntarism means that people act for rewards intrinsically connected with their action. Love provides its own justification. Voluntarism implies lives in which means and ends are joined, where nothing is merely a means to an end, but all activity comes to be undertaken as an end in itself. If there are things that “need doing”, and nobody wants to do them, they just won’t get done. Many aspects of life with which we are familiar might disappear, but then if they are dependent upon compulsion and coercion they are not worthwhile, and maybe we will invent alternative ways.

Applied to politics, the philosophy of voluntarism is anarchism. But voluntarism cannot be limited to the political sphere alone. Freeing men from political compulsion will not be possible without, at the same time, freeing them from economic compulsion. Ridding societies of economic compulsion, in turn, may be impossible without at the same time freeing men of certain habits of mind, which means that we must deal with the problems of education. Thus, to solve the problems in any one of the fields of politics, economics, education, and family life one will eventually end up dealing with all of them.

II

The historical roots of the philosophy of voluntarism go back to the traditions of anarchism, pacifism, communism, and non-authoritarian utopias. Important antecedents include the writings of such men as Godwin, William Morris, Kropotkin, Malatesta, Tolstoy, Thoreau, and Gandhi.

The anarchist theory is that government in the coercive sense is superfluous because man may be co-operative as well as aggressive. Social life can be carried out just as well on a voluntary as on a compulsory basis. The root of the anarchist analysis takes us close to

FRANK LINDENFIELD is an assistant professor at California State College.

some strands of modern sociological thought. Two examples may suffice. Concerning government and laws, the anarchists give us a picture of a ruling class or group, writing laws and otherwise manipulating the rest of the society largely for its own benefits. In education, the anarchists subject the very content of ideas by state-paid teachers to searing analysis: children learn from their teachers that the state is necessary because it is to the interests of those who run the state that they should believe this and be tractable.

The voluntarist approach draws upon both the utopian and communist traditions when it comes to ends. Only some of the utopians are congenial, however. A number of them, starting with Plato, have been in favour of forcing men to be free. This I cannot agree to; I much prefer the voluntaristic utopia of William Morris’s *News From Nowhere* to the regimentation envisaged by Sir Thomas More. The real danger of the utopians lies in the belief held by most of them that *they* have found the truth, and that everybody else must be compelled to live according to the dictates of those who know best.

The root of the social problem is economic, for men can be coaxed to do evil to their brothers not only through physical coercion, but also through economic need. The ruling classes can have their orders obeyed because the others are dependent on them for a living. Thus, the ideal society should be based on the revolutionary communist slogan, “From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.” The various forms of social compulsion endorsed by state socialists do not provide a very attractive ideal, except to those living in “underdeveloped” economies and to those whose main objection to capitalism is that the profits are not widely enough shared. But living as I do in a wealthy society, neither capitalism nor state socialism appeal much to me: capitalism because it is based upon production for profit instead of need, and state socialism because it makes possible the substitution of new forms of coercion for the older ones.

From the pacifists, we can learn about means. The pacifist insight is crucial. Its root lies in an instinctive distaste for violence in social affairs. The pacifist knows that the chief evils of contemporary society are nationalism and organized warfare. They are evil in and of themselves, and also because they contribute to the strength of the state. The pacifist sees that ends and means mutually shape each other, and that it is a utopian folly to imagine that somehow a non-violent world can be brought about through the most violent means. I would be willing to grant that violent and bloody revolution may sometimes be the only way to bring about the end of dictatorial oppression. Still, I cannot conceive that the world of love that I want could emerge from such a revolution because to kill people for “good” causes is still to brutalize yourself.

Most pacifists approve of human emotionality. Violence on the personal level is regrettable but understandable to them, and they see that it is all too human to get mad and to want to hurt another. Perhaps both hate and love are preferable to indifference. What pacifists most object to is the *impersonal* violence exercised on behalf of such

abstract principles as "freedom", "justice", etc.

Connected with the pacifist ethic is an abhorrence of military conscription. Voluntarism is opposed to conscription and coercion in all forms. Under today's conditions, wars are never just and always immoral; but implicit in the voluntarist idea is the feeling that somehow wars are less evil if all of the soldiers are volunteers. That is why we admire the men of the International Brigades who volunteered to fight in Spain.

In a way, voluntarism is profoundly conservative, because if you are not willing to use coercion on behalf of bad causes, you are also not willing to use coercion on behalf of good ones. This means that even though I support the struggle of Southern Negroes in the United States for freedom, I do not favour sending government troops to Southern states to enforce integration; I know this will get me into trouble with my liberal friends, but once you accept the principle of armed intervention, you have given up your ability to criticize intervention against *your* cause. Southern Negroes will not be freed by external armed intervention; they will have to do this, largely, by themselves, and indeed they are beginning to have some limited success. On the other hand, I would see nothing wrong with volunteers going to help them if they want such help.

How to get from the less pleasant present to some more pleasant future is a key issue of voluntarism. The controversy over the role of violence cannot ever be entirely resolved, for it is in the nature of the human situation that we are continually faced with impossible dilemmas. However much my pacifist inclinations may make me abhor bloodshed and violence, my sympathy with the plight of those who are exploited makes me able to understand why some men are driven to revolutions for national liberation and to military uprisings. Instead of absolute condemnation of all social violence, I would follow the stand taken by Gandhi, which counsels us to resist evil, and to try to use non-violent means because such means are morally preferable. Instead of the belief in force held by such anarchists as Bakunin and Stirner, or the belief in absolute non-violence as held by the religious anarchists like Tolstoy, I prefer the painful ambivalence of Malatesta. I am not so sure of what I would do if I were a Vietnamese today, or a black man in South Africa.

III

It would be nice if we could have an anarchist society, but this is a goal which is unlikely to be achieved in the near future. In a world in which most people are not ready for this, we have a choice of trying to work within existing institutions to make them better, of setting up "parallel" institutions, or doing both. Parallelism is attractive because it promises immediate results. It involves doing today in the here and now what you think should be done. You try to establish on a voluntary basis those social organizations that you think are good, and you do not wait until you have 51 per cent of the ballots or the bullets.

Voluntarism is directly opposed to the notion of bringing about

social change by capturing command of the centres of economic and political power. If over half of the people voluntarily agreed with us, we would still be reluctant to force our will upon a dissenting minority. Because voluntarism is directed towards the abolition of power instead of its capture, it leads to a tendency to withdraw from existing institutions and a parallel effort to establish new ones.

The voluntarist propagandizes, but does not force anyone to join in the new institutions. He tries to live as he sees fit, while residing in the larger existing system. On the other hand, voluntarists may reluctantly participate in conventional politics when necessary, as one means of self defence.

In America, a number of the students involved in such movements as SDS and SNCC tend to lean in the direction of anarchism; but there is still a basic ambivalence among many of them whether they wish to do things that are "politically relevant" or not. They feel alienated in the face of big business, big government, big universities. They suffer from the dominance of bureaucratic institutions. They react violently to the dehumanization encouraged by the spread of giant organizations and to the establishment of bureaucratization as a dominant trend and style of life. But they are not sure whether the way to achieve the world they want lies through traditional political action, or through direct action.

In the present situation there is no necessary contradiction between direct action and traditional political action, such as voting and writing letters to representatives. The same person might reasonably do both, without accepting political party activities as any panacea. While agitating for a voluntaristic society, we can still support reform efforts such as the provision of a guaranteed minimum annual income for all persons regardless of whether they work. And if your government is pursuing an evil war (as in Vietnam) it behoves you to do everything you can through conventional politics to get your government to stop. It is not necessary to limit your efforts to such action, but we cannot ignore its possible effectiveness. Thus to stop a war, you may try to vote better men into office or write letters to those who are in, or you may take direct personal action such as destroying military equipment or avoiding payment of taxes. These take on a political significance in that they are designed to influence a government to change its foreign policy. If we want a world in which conscription does not exist, we may lobby and vote and try to get the legislature to change the law. But we can also take direct action which has political implications by burning draft cards or refusing to be conscripted.

There may be times at which anarchist groups see the need for working in alliance with other political groups in electing certain candidates. But by and large, such political participation is carried out without illusions. Also, it may sometimes be possible as an educational device to run political candidates who would be committed to using their offices in unorthodox fashion. For example, Jim Garrett has suggested a candidate elected to a state legislature could bring in his constituents to speak on various issues: mothers receiving wel-

fare to speak on Welfare Bills, students to speak about Education Bills, etc. A possible result of this would be that the people involved would become disillusioned with the conventional politics and would go back home to try to organize themselves to take care of their own problems.

The difference between direct and indirect action can be seen most clearly in the civil rights movement in the United States. Most of the students involved in the sit-in and other forms of direct action are not opposed to the existence of civil rights laws. It is just that they know that to bring about a free society, you must do more than just lobby for better laws or better interpretation of the laws, as the NAACP has tended to do. The essence of the direct action philosophy is that it involves the insistence of a determined minority to act as though it had certain legal rights instead of trying to change the laws by writing to their congressmen. These tactics were used in the Berkeley Free Speech Movement. The same philosophy leads young people to assert their sexual freedom in their behaviour instead of concentrating on changing outmoded sex laws.

IV

Voluntarism implies a diversity of social forms. Different groups of people would be free to choose between alternative forms of social organization and ways of life. The voluntarist does not want all men living the way he would like to live, with everybody forced into the same strait-jacket of utopia. The voluntarist wants to live as he likes with his friends, and let others live as they like, with their friends. Voluntarism means the freedom to choose a life of creativity and pleasure, or one of ignominy, wretchedness, and boredom.

So far as education is concerned, for example, there could be many different kinds of experiments, but on a voluntary basis. Without uniformity, there might be some educational institutions with very low standards, but then nobody would be forced to go to them, and perhaps there would be a process of natural selection. If students did not have to go to school, if we eliminated all of the compulsory aspects, perhaps after a while the really bad schools and bad teachers would have no students.

Likewise, when freed of economic compulsion, people would enter and remain within only those associations in which they felt comfortable. Women would be freer to leave their husbands if they did not like them. And if a "boss" insults an economically independent man, he will be free to quit and go it alone, or to join another association, or to do nothing.

Now, there are all kinds of problems involved in applied anarchy. It could work with saints, but could social systems based on voluntarism work with ordinary mortals? The answer is yes and no. It *could* work, but *it would never work without some radical reconstruction of the economic basis of social life*. Political voluntarism depends upon economic voluntarism, and vice versa. Once men are assured that they have enough to eat and keep them comfortable from the elements, they will be free to combine for innumerable social

purposes.

Whether the economic problem can be solved within the context of a larger society that operates upon coercive principles is not at all clear. As Staughton Lynd has put it, "Employment appears to be the Achilles heel of parallelism." This is *the* major problem to which we must address our efforts if we are to put our ideas into practice. I can offer no panaceas, but it does seem to me that we have not explored all the possibilities of initiating co-operative enterprises on the basis of minimal capital.

There is also the problem of numbers. It may be that in a society in which there are very large numbers, and in which anonymity is possible, that some forms of compulsion (i.e. policemen) are necessary. This seems to me to be an argument for keeping social units relatively small. But once you remove economic compulsion, if you can have what you want by taking it, there is not much left of conventional notions of crime.

An important question, and one for which I do not necessarily have the answers, concerns the problems of co-ordination and co-operation. In the absence of government coercion how would we be able to co-ordinate our activities? Among the answers to this question is that some of the existing uniformity is superfluous. There is no reason why all the pupils in all the schools of a state should have the same curriculum. This would free us of many school administrators. For other tasks, where genuine co-operation of different social units is needed, it can take place naturally without any governmental coercion at all. It is likely that there will be occasions in which men do not voluntarily co-operate and in which parts of a voluntarist society would "break down" because one community, for example, puts its sewage into the drinking water of another. But I think that these risks are preferable to the continued risks of more world wars.

A viable social order must rest largely upon voluntary co-operation in any event. Most people have internalized certain social mores, and they do not commit crimes because they do not want to commit them. Would we really have more murders if we had no police? Would the men in one community wilfully ignore the fact that their sewage was getting into the drinking water of another community, and hurting people in that other community, once it had been called to their attention?

It may not be possible or even desirable to eliminate all authority—I would propose eliminating only that kind of authority which is based on coercion. Authority based upon knowledge related to the task at hand is generally respected, because when men trust each other they are not afraid to follow each others' suggestions.

Thus if there is to be a bridge built across a river, obviously even in a free society, people will voluntarily submit to following the suggestions of an engineer who knows about building bridges. But that will be because they want a bridge and he knows how to help them build it, and not because he has some title.

What are the implications of the foregoing for the direction of our activities? Politics cannot be ignored, but should definitely be relegated to second place. If and when it becomes possible for a humanitarian political movement to gain power, at some time in the future, there will be ample time for anarchists to figure out how they wish to relate to such a movement. In the meantime, it is more important to put our efforts into trying to put our ideas into practice in the here and now. The key to arriving at a decentralization and democratization of social institutions is to concentrate our efforts on: (a) education and (b) creating living examples of the kinds of communities we would like to see in widespread existence.

The 'Problem' of Abortion

M. I. FINESILVER

THE "PROBLEM" OF ABORTION—in many ways similar to the "problem" of crime is one, it is widely held, with which every modern society has to come to terms. Both of these notional problems, however, can be seen as essentially the products of the general acceptance of a given social system, one that has evolved along with all the norms of attitude, value and behaviour, and from which have eventually arisen laws and a legal system. As a topic of discussion abortion is found to be a far more delicate one than crime, since it is concerned with something very much closer to life itself, and is less abstract. But it does show many similarities when seen as just one more of the many problems of society and the individual. On closer examination the main factors involved in this problem, those which account for there being a "problem of abortion" as such, are found to be rather vague and thin; though they carry much weight with those people normally heard expressing opinions "one way or the other" on the topic. It is probably the very lack of concreteness in these factors which has enabled them to retain their mystical influence for so long. They could be said to form a closed system of beliefs, comparable perhaps to those found in tribal societies believing in witchcraft.

The main factors, briefly and broadly, are these. Firstly the tremendous shame and social degradation closely attached to the very idea of a woman bearing children outside marriage. Pity for the "fallen woman", as such—or her unfortunate offspring—merely serves to strengthen the underlying general acceptance of the legally supported conventions governing marriage and procreation. Such pity, though possibly well-meaning, does not lead to, but effectively avoids, any constructively critical examination of the current system of beliefs, that basically creates the problem situation. There is surely a certain futility in attempting to adapt 20th-century citizens to a system based on ethics and morals which range back over many hundreds of years to pre-scientific days.

The second main factor concerns the economic difficulties of the woman who is unable financially to support the child she is expecting. She may be unmarried, not earning enough—or anything at all yet—or she may have too many children already. But whichever particular case it is, this sort of argument, mostly put on behalf of such women by well-intentioned others, almost always implies an automatic acceptance of the present economic system as unquestionable. That there is not enough money for this potential child to come into the world and grow up at a decent standard of living, regardless of whether the woman wants it or not, is accepted as in the natural order of things, and is thus a good reason for terminating the pregnancy. Straight from economic theory (the most inhuman of the social sciences) we can see such principles as "efficiency" and "redundancy" being readily employed, though never specifically mentioned, in this sort of argument.

Closely connected is the next problem of what to do with children who might have been aborted, but have been born into a situation where the parents cannot, or will not, take responsibility for their upbringing. The underlying belief here is that its own family is the only proper social environment for the child to grow up in, and that all other ways must be inferior and less desirable, though unfortunately necessary in many cases.

Although often treated in discussions on abortion as merely peripheral to the big, real problems, the most relevant factor of all is, of course, contraception. Here we have the possible enlightenment about, and availability of, the most modern applications of science for the benefit of individuals and society in general; whereby an increasing degree of rationality, and thus individual responsibility, can become part of all normal (hetero-)sexual—and therefore potentially reproductive—relationships. This is a classic case of the old prevention/cure discussion, and here prevention cannot but win hands down, since nobody claims to like the physical act of abortion itself.

But this somehow usually gets pushed aside by all the rhetoric and moralistic argument, which is hardly concerned with abortion itself, and much more with the typical and familiar sets of ideas and principles normally found arguing out such topics. I refer here to the predictable reactionary/religious "No . . . with possible exceptions", and the consciously progressive "Yes . . . but only in certain cases" (whose definition is always much clearer in theory than in practice). Regarding abortion itself, the most relevant questions for anyone concerned must be along the lines of "Which methods may be employed? Which are the safest and least unpleasant? And which show least evidence of bad after-effects, physical or psychological?" These are what really matter.

The legal position is that before a doctor can carry out a legal abortion he must take a second opinion on the woman's "total environment, actual and foreseeable". This would refer mainly to possible psychiatric problems due to social and/or economic pressures on the pregnant woman, for few would question abortion where the woman's physical health or even life were in danger through her pregnancy.

So how are we to come to terms with this "problem of abortion"? The first point I raised about the conventional attitude towards women bearing children outside marriage really speaks for itself. It asks which we value more: the creation of human life, in the best possible total environment, or its humiliating subjection to a set of confused, contradictory and very obsolete ethics and morals?

The second factor, concerning the economics of child-bearing, must eventually lead us to question the whole economic (and political) structure of our society, which in the 20th century still allows such really unnecessary problems to appear inevitable. The third factor is, in effect, purely an administrative task which could, and should, be undertaken on a large scale by this Welfare State. It is basically a question of providing the links between the parents of the unwanted children and the numerous suitable would-be adopters, and also establishing much-improved institutional homes for those children not chosen to be adopted.

In this sort of set-up, the pregnant woman who just does not want the baby to be born would not have to turn to abortion as the last means of escape, since the burden of the child's upbringing would have been removed—or at least made avoidable. And we should not forget the onus at present on the doctor, whose training is for the curing of disease, not the alleviating of individual social situations. Also, with ample State-provided information and advice for all on contraception there would, surely, not be the much-feared boom in pregnancies, and thus abortions, especially amongst the promiscuous young.

All the approaches I have been suggesting so far have tried to indicate that abortion is not an end in itself but "the unfortunate failure of family planning", and that "improved contraception means less abortion", to quote a leading British authority on obstetrics and gynaecology, Sir Dugald Baird. In the last resort the decision whether to terminate a pregnancy or not must be the woman's alone—though ideally with medical advice. Similarly with sterilisation if she feels her child-bearing days should be over.

Thus we can now see that the great preoccupation with what the law should or should not allow concerning abortion, in fact, just emphasises the many inconsistencies and perhaps unconscious prejudices behind each opposed argument, be it for or against. Were we to start instead with the simple intention of trying to reduce suffering wherever possible, and especially where it is well within our ability to do so, we might find real action a lot more effective and rewarding all round than all the familiar and vociferous argument. For this sort of argument is very much of the self-perpetuating variety, serving only to stress and maintain the old traditional divisions in our society.

The "problem of abortion" need no longer be just another topic for endless argument, like foxhunting or euthanasia, but something to be dealt with in the most practical and humane way possible, like, for example, the problem of vaccination against dangerous diseases. We are in the 20th century and we are responsible citizens in a democratic society . . . aren't we?

In next month's
ANARCHY
Peter Ford
discusses
Libertarian
Psychiatry

