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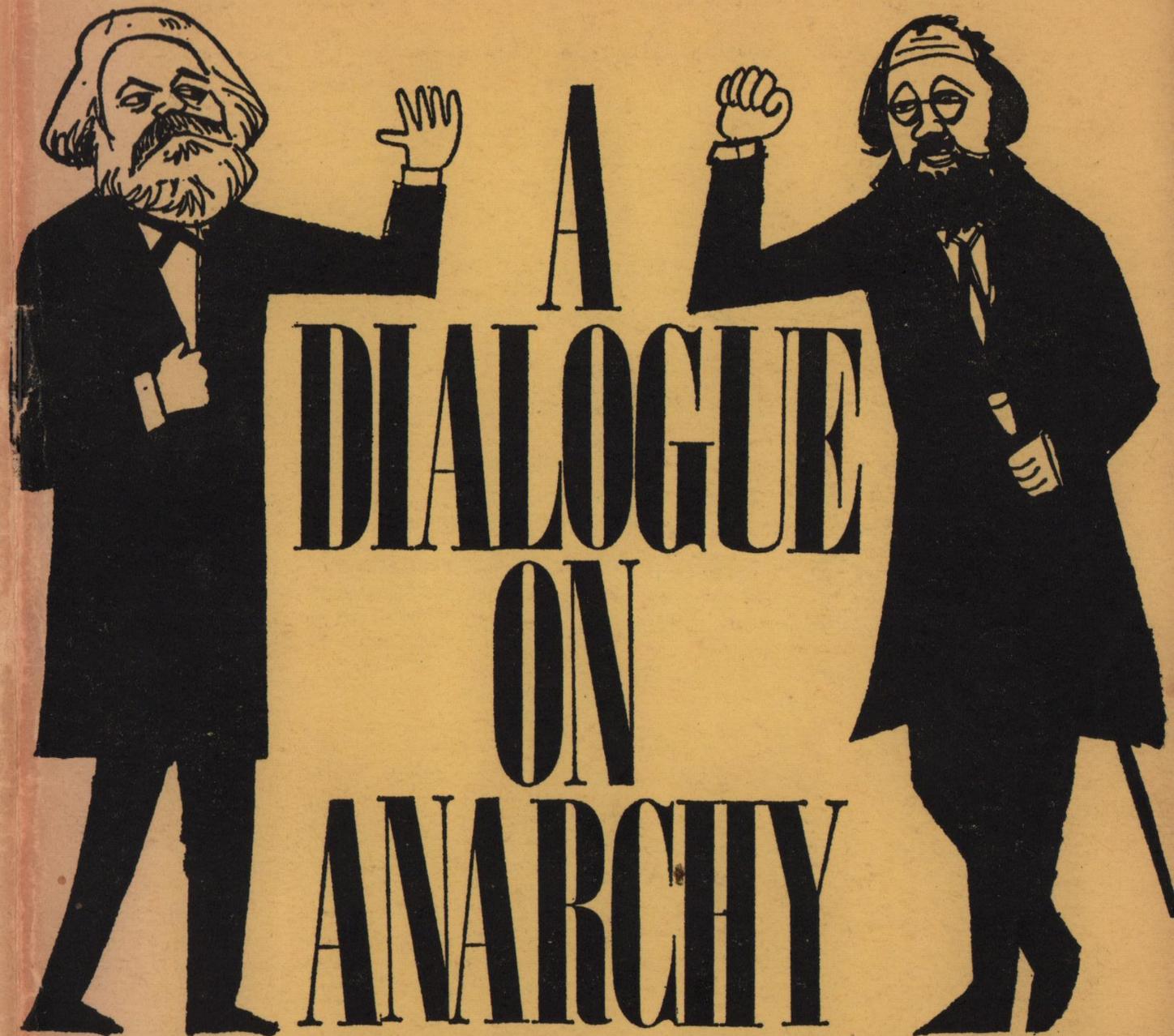
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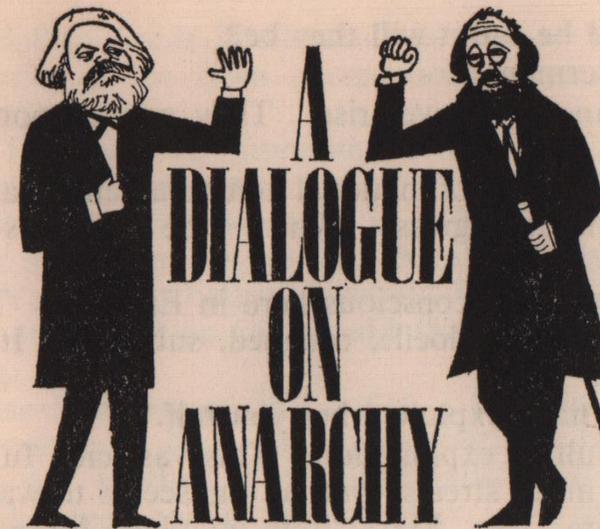
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Maurice Cranston

An imaginary conversation between Karl Marx and Michael Bakunin

On November 3, 1864, Karl Marx and Michael Bakunin met for the last time. Their conversation took place in Bakunin's lodgings in London, where the Russian anarchist was paying a short visit, and where Marx was living in exile. They had known each other for twenty years, but their friendship was precarious. Each was wary of the other, and both were competing for leadership of the workers' international. Their theories of socialism were sharply opposed, but each still regarded the other as a possible ally in the struggle against the bourgeoisie. In time they were to become bitter enemies; but their meeting in London was in the eyes of both a success. In this dialogue, broadcast by the BBC in October, Maurice Cranston has attempted to reconstruct their exchange of ideas.

BAKUNIN: My dear Marx, I can offer you tobacco and tea; but otherwise I fear the hospitality of these lodgings is frugal. I am at the moment impoverished.

MARX: I am always poor, Bakunin. There is nothing I do not know about poverty. It is the worst of evils.

BAKUNIN: Slavery is the worst of evils, Marx, not poverty. A cup of tea? I always have it ready; these London housemaids are very kind. When I lived in Paddington Green there was one called Grace—a *bonne a tout faire*—she used to run up and down stairs all day and most of the night with my hot water and sugar.

MARX: Yes, the working classes have a hard life in England; they should be the first to revolt.

MAURICE CRANSTON, born 1920, lectures on political science at the London School of Economics. He is the author of Freedom: a new social analysis; Human Rights Today; a biography of John Locke and a recent study of Sartre.

BAKUNIN: They should be. But will they be?

MARX: They, or the Germans.

BAKUNIN: The Germans will never rise. They would sooner die than rebel.

MARX: It is not a question of national temperament, Bakunin; it is a matter of industrial progress. Where the workers are class conscious . . .

BAKUNIN: They are not class conscious here in England. That housemaid I spoke of was entirely docile, resigned, subdued. It pained me to see her so exploited.

MARX: You appear to have exploited her yourself.

BAKUNIN: London is full of exploitation. This vast city, full of misery and squalor and dark, mean streets—yet no one seems to want to throw a barricade across them. No, Marx, it is no place for a socialist.

MARX: But it is almost the only place that will have us. I have been here for fifteen years.

BAKUNIN: A pity you never came to see me in Paddington Green. I was there for more than twelve months. When I found your card yesterday, I realised our paths had not crossed since the old days in Paris.

MARX: I had to leave Paris in 1845.

BAKUNIN: Ah yes, before the rising in Dresden, when I fell, so to speak, into the enemy's hands. They kept me in prison for ten years. Then they sent me to Siberia; but as you know, I escaped, and made my way to London. Now I have a place to live in Italy. I am going back to Florence next week.

MARX: Well, at least you keep moving.

BAKUNIN: I have to. I am not so discreet a revolutionary as you are. The crowned heads of Europe have kept me moving.

MARX: The crowned heads of Europe have expelled me from several countries, too. And poverty has forced me out of several homes.

BAKUNIN: Ah yes, poverty . . . I am always penniless, always having to borrow money from friends. Indeed I suppose I must have lived on borrowed money for a large part of my life—except when I was in prison—and now I am fifty. But I never think about money. It is very bourgeois to think about money.

MARX: You are fortunate. You have no family to keep.

BAKUNIN: You must know that I acquired a wife in Poland. Though it is true that we have no children. Have some tea? I shall. A Russian cannot live without tea.

MARX: And you are very much the Russian, Bakunin; very much the Russian nobleman, to be more precise. It must be difficult for someone of your temperament to enter into the mind of the proletariat.

BAKUNIN: And what of yourself, Marx? Are you not the son of prosperous bourgeois, a lawyer? And is your wife not Freiin von Westphalen, the daughter of Baron von Westphalen and the sister of the Prussian Minister of the Interior? That is hardly a plebeian background.

MARX: Socialism needs intellectuals as well as working men. Besides, I have learned a lot from persecution and hunger in the cold and sleepless night of exile.

BAKUNIN: The night of imprisonment is longer and colder. But I am so accustomed to hunger that I scarcely even notice it now.

MARX: I think the worst thing is to see one's children die because one has not enough money to feed them properly.

BAKUNIN: Yes, I can believe it would be. To be condemned to death oneself is not as bad as you would think. In a way, I found it quite exhilarating.

MARX: Since I have been in London, I have lived in cheap and sordid furnished rooms. I have had to borrow and buy food on credit, and then pawn our clothes to pay the bills. My children are used to answering the door and telling creditors I am not at home. All of us, my wife and I, and the children and an old servant are still crowded into two rooms—and there is not a clean or decent piece of furniture in either of them. I try to work at the same broken table where my wife sews and the children play, and often we sit for hours without light or food because there is no money to pay for either. My wife is often ill, and so are the children but I cannot call a doctor, because I could not pay his fees or buy the medicines he would order.

BAKUNIN: My dear Marx! Does not your collaborator Engels?—I always understood—

MARX: Engels is extremely generous, but he has not always been able to help me. Believe me, I have suffered every kind of misfortune. My greatest unhappiness came eight years ago, when my son Edgar died at the age of six.

Francis Bacon says that really important people have so many contacts with nature and the world, and have so much to interest them, that they easily get over a loss. I am not one of those important people, Bakunin. My son's death affected me so greatly that I feel the loss as bitterly today as I did on the day when he died.

BAKUNIN: If money is what you need, Alexander Herzen has plenty. I usually turn to him first. I see no reason why he should not help you too.

MARX: Herzen is a bourgeois reformer of the most superficial kind. I have no time for the society of such people.

BAKUNIN: If it had not been for Herzen, I should not have been able to translate your *Communist Manifesto* into Russian as I did a year or two ago.

MARX: A belated translation; but I am grateful for it. Perhaps you might think next of translating *The Poverty of Philosophy*.

BAKUNIN: No, my dear Marx, I do not rank that among your greater works. It is altogether too hard on Pierre-Joseph Proudhon.

MARX: It is intended to be hard on him. How could it be otherwise since it is a refutation of his *Philosophy of Poverty*?

BAKUNIN: It is a work of polemics against another socialist.

MARX: Proudhon is not a socialist. He is an ignoramus—a typical lower-class autodidact, a *parvenu* of economics who makes a great

show of the qualities he does not possess. His loudmouthed, boastful, blather about science is really intolerable.

BAKUNIN: I admit Proudhon is limited. But he is a hundred times more revolutionary than all the doctrinaire and bourgeois socialists. He has the courage to declare himself an atheist. Above all, he has come out for liberty against authority, for a socialism which is to be entirely free from any kind of government regulation. Proudhon is an anarchist, and admitted.

MARX: In other words, his ideas are very like yours.

BAKUNIN: I have felt his influence, but Proudhon never goes far enough for me. He shrinks from action and violence. He does not see that destruction is itself a form of creation. I am an active revolutionary. Proudhon was a theoretical socialist, like yourself.

MARX: I do not know what you mean by a theoretical socialist, Bakunin; but I venture to claim that I have been as active a socialist as you.

BAKUNIN: My dear Marx, I meant nothing disrespectful. Indeed I remember that you were removed from Bonn University for duelling with pistols, so I know you will be a useful soldier of the revolution if we can ever get you out of the library at the British Museum and on to the barricades. When I spoke of you as a theoretical socialist, I meant to say that you are a theorist of socialism as Proudhon is. I could never write a long philosophical treatise of the kind that you and he write. A pamphlet represents my limit.

MARX: You are an educated man. You could not write in the vulgar way that Proudhon writes.

BAKUNIN: Well, it is true that Proudhon is the son of a peasant, and a self-taught man, whereas I am the son of a landowner, though I suppose what you are thinking of, Marx, is that I studied Hegelian philosophy at Berlin University.

MARX: You could not have a better education. And I should expect a socialist of your culture to do more than shoulder a rifle at the barricades or set fire to the Opera House at Dresden.

BAKUNIN: You flatter me, Marx. I did not personally set fire to the Opera House. And I was certainly not acting in Dresden on behalf of anarchism. The fact of the matter, as you ought to remember, is that the Saxon Diet voted for a federal constitution for Germany. The King of Saxony would have nothing to do with any kind of unification, and dismissed the Diet. The people were indignant, and in May of that year they began to put up barricades in the streets of Dresden. The Parliamentary leaders—who were, of course, bourgeois liberals—entered the Town Hall and proclaimed a provisional government.

MARX: Not, I should have thought, an inspiring cause for one so opposed as you are to all forms of government.

BAKUNIN: Well, at any rate, the people had taken arms against a King. They had rebelled. That was something. So, as I happened to be in Dresden, I put myself at the disposal of the revolution. After all, I was trained for the army. The Saxon bourgeois liberals had no knowledge of arms whatever. I and a couple of Polish officers formed

the general staff of the insurgent forces.

MARX: Soldiers of fortune, eh? But, then, you were not very fortunate.

BAKUNIN: No, it did not last more than a few days. The King found Prussian reinforcements, and we had to evacuate Dresden. As you said, some of our men set fire to the Opera House. I was all for blowing up the Town Hall with ourselves in it. But the Poles had disappeared by that time, and the last of the Saxon liberals wanted to remove his government to Chemnitz. I could not desert him, and so I was led like a lamb to the slaughter. At Chemnitz the local *burgermeister* arrested us in our beds.

MARX: So you went to prison, Bakunin, for the cause of German unity; and for trying to establish by force a bourgeois liberal government. I find that ironical.

BAKUNIN: I might well have been shot for it. But I am a wiser man now than I was then. Indeed I have learned a lot from you, Marx. I disagreed with you in 1848 but now I see that you were far more right than I was. I am afraid that the flames of the revolutionary movement in Europe went to my head, and I was more interested in the negative than the positive side of the revolution.

MARX: Well, I am glad you put your years of enforced reflection to good use.

BAKUNIN: Still, there was one point where I was right, and you were wrong Marx. As a Slav, I wanted the liberation of the Slav race from the German yoke. I wanted this to be brought about by a revolution—that is, by a destruction of the existing regimes of Russia, Austria, Prussia and Turkey; and by the reorganisation of the people from below upwards in complete liberty.

MARX: So you have not thought better of your old Panslavism? You are still the same old Russian patriot you were in Paris.

BAKUNIN: What do you mean by “Russian Patriot”? Be frank, Marx, do you still believe that I am some kind of Russian government agent?

MARX: I have never believed it, and one of the reasons why I have come here today is to clear away any lingering vestiges of that unfortunate suspicion.

BAKUNIN: But the story was first published in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* when you were the editor.

MARX: I have explained that before. The story came from our Paris correspondent that George Sand had said you were a Russian spy. Afterwards we published George Sand’s denial and your own in full. We could do no more. I have also expressed my own regret.

BAKUNIN: But you haven’t succeeded in killing the rumour. Even though I was sent from an Austrian prison to a Russian one, kept for years in solitary confinement and then sent to Siberia. You have never been to prison, Marx. You will never understand what it feels like to find yourself buried alive. To have to say to yourself every hour of the day and night “I am a slave; I am annihilated”. To be full of devotion and heroism, to serve the sacred cause of liberty, and to see all your enthusiasm break against four bare walls. That is bad enough. It is worse to come out and find you are pursued by the wicked libel

that you are an agent of the very tyrant who has persecuted you.

MARX: But nobody believes that story any longer.

BAKUNIN: Alas, my dear Marx; it is circulating afresh here in London. It has been printed in one of those papers, published by Denis Urquhart—an English friend of yours I am sorry to say.

MARX: Urquhart is a monomaniac. He loves everything Turkish and hates everything Russian—indiscriminately. He is not altogether sane.

BAKUNIN: But you write for his press and you appear on his platforms my dear Marx.

MARX: He is a likeable eccentric. And since he shares my views of Palmerston—or thinks he does—he provides a medium for the publication of my work. It is propaganda. And it pays a little, just as the *New York Tribune* does. But let me assure you, Bakunin, that the reappearance of that idiotic story of your being a Russian spy has distressed me more than it has distressed you. And I hope you will allow me to apologise once more here and now, for ever having had anything to do with the circulation of it. I have never ceased to regret it.

BAKUNIN: Of course I accept your apology, Marx.

MARX: But there is one thing that I must in honesty add, that I regard your Panslavism as being entirely inimical to the interests of socialism, and only conducive to the sinister growth of Russian power in Europe.

BAKUNIN: Panslavism—and I mean, of course, democratic Panslavism—is one part of the great movement of European liberation.

MARX: Nonsense, nonsense.

BAKUNIN: Prove that it is nonsense, my dear Marx. Justify your criticism.

MARX: The proper age of Panslavism was the 8th and 9th centuries, when the Southern Slavs still occupied all of Hungary and Austria and threatened Byzantium. If they could not defend themselves then, and win their independence when their two enemies, the Germans and the Magyars, were hacking one another to pieces, how can they expect to do so now, after a thousand years of subjection and denationalisation? Nearly every country in Europe contains minorities, odd ruins of people, left-overs of the past, pushed back by the nations which became the carriers of historical development. Hegel, you will remember, called them ethnic trash.

BAKUNIN: In other words, you see such peoples as wholly contemptible, as having no rights to live.

MARX: I do not understand the language of rights. The very existence of such peoples is a protest against history; and that is why they are always reactionary. Look at the Gaels in Scotland—supporters of the Stuarts from 1640 to 1745; look at the Bretons in France, supporters of the Bourbons from 1792 to 1800. Or the Basques in Spain. And look at Austria itself in 1848. Who made the revolution then? The Germans and the Magyars. And who provided the armies which enabled Austrian reactionaries to crush the revolution? The Slavs.

The Slavs fought the Italians and stormed Vienna on behalf of the Hapsburg monarchy. Slav troops keep the Hapsburgs in power.

BAKUNIN: Naturally there are Slavs in the Emperor's armies. But you know very well that the Panslavist movement is a democratic one, determined to oppose the Hapsburgs just as much as the Romanovs and the Hohenzollerns.

MARX: Oh, I have read your manifestoes, Bakunin. I know what you would *like* to achieve.

BAKUNIN: Then you will know what I have advocated: the abolition of all artificial frontiers in Europe and the creation of boundaries which are traced by the sovereign will of the people themselves.

MARX: That sounds very well. But you simply ignore the real obstacles that stand in the way of any such scheme—the completely different levels of civilisation that different European peoples have achieved.

BAKUNIN: I have always seen the difficulties, Marx; and I have said that the only way of surmounting them is by a policy of federation. The Slav is no enemy of democratic Germans or democratic Magyars—we offer them a brotherly alliance on the basis of liberty, fraternity and equality.

MARX: But those are mere words. They tell us nothing about facts. And the facts are quite brutally simple. Except for your own race and the Poles, and perhaps the Slavs of Turkey, no other Slavs have any future whatever, because those other Slavs have none of the historical, geographical, economic, political and industrial prerequisites of independence. They have no civilisation.

BAKUNIN: And the Germans have? Is that it? You think that their greater civilisation gives the Germans the right to dominate Europe, and commit any crimes against the rest.

MARX: What crimes? So far as I read history, I find that the only crime that the Germans and the Magyars have committed against the Slavs is to prevent them from becoming Turkish.

BAKUNIN: Well, my dear Marx, I have always said of Germany what Voltaire said of God: if it did not exist we should have to invent it. For there is nothing so effective for keeping Panslavism alive as hatred of Germany.

MARX: There you have another proof that your wretched Panslavism is reactionary. It teaches people to hate the Germans instead of hating their real enemies, the bourgeoisie.

BAKUNIN: The two go together. That is where I have advanced beyond the crude nationalism of my youth. Now I say that liberty is a lie for the great majority of people if they are deprived of education, leisure, and bread.

MARX: I consider you a friend, Bakunin, as you know, and I do not hesitate to call you a socialist, in spite of everything . . .

BAKUNIN: In spite of what?

MARX: Well, you are clearly not interested in what I call politics.

BAKUNIN: I am certainly not interested in parliaments, and parties, and constituent assemblies or representative institutions. Humanity

needs something altogether more inspiring. A new world without laws and without states.

MARX: Anarchy?

BAKUNIN: Yes, anarchy. We must overthrow the whole political and moral order of the world as it is today. We must change it from top to bottom. It is no good just trying to modify existing institutions.

MARX: I do not wish to modify them. I simply say that the workers should take them over.

BAKUNIN: They should be completely abolished. The state corrupts our instincts and our will as well as our intelligence. The first principle of any valid socialism is to overthrow society.

MARX: I should call that a curious definition of socialism.

BAKUNIN: I am not interested in definitions, Marx. That is where I differ from you. I don't believe that any ready-made system is going to save the world. I have no system. I am a seeker. I believe in instinct rather than thought.

MARX: But you cannot be a socialist without a policy.

BAKUNIN: Of course I have a policy. And if it impresses you to have things set out point by point, I will tell you what my programme is. First it is to do away with man-made laws.

MARX: But you cannot do away with laws. The whole universe is governed by laws.

BAKUNIN: Natural laws assuredly—they cannot be done away with. Indeed I agree with you that men can enlarge their liberty by extending their understanding of the natural laws which rule the universe. Man cannot escape from nature, and it would be absurd to try to do so. But that is not what I proposed. I said we should abolish man-made laws—artificial laws—in other words, political and juridical laws.

MARX: You cannot seriously believe that society should impose no laws on its members?

BAKUNIN: Society should have no need to impose laws. Man is by nature a social creature. Outside society he is either a wild beast or a saint. There have to be laws in capitalist society because capitalist society is competitive, acquisitive, and sets one man against another. Freedom will only be possible when all men are equal. That is why there cannot be liberty without socialism.

MARX: There I entirely agree with you.

BAKUNIN: You say you agree with me, Marx. But when I say that there cannot be freedom without socialism, I also say that socialism without freedom is slavery and brutality.

MARX: I have never advocated socialism without freedom.

BAKUNIN: You have, my dear Marx, you have. You ask for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

MARX: The dictatorship of the proletariat is a part of freedom too because it is part of the process of liberation.

BAKUNIN: When I speak of liberty, I have in mind the only freedom worthy of that name—liberty consisting in the full development of all the material, intellectual and moral powers latent in man—a liberty which does not recognise any restriction but those traced by the laws

of our own nature. I think of a freedom which, far from finding itself checked by the freedom of others, is, on the contrary, confirmed and extended by the freedom of all. I think of freedom triumphing over brute force and the principle of authority.

MARX: I hear your words, Bakunin, but I do not know what meaning to ascribe to them. But one thing, I will say, and that is you will never hasten the coming of socialism, or achieve anything else in politics unless you have a principle of authority.

BAKUNIN: Socialism will need a principle of discipline, but not authority. And not the kind of discipline which is imposed from outside; but a voluntary and reflective discipline which a man imposes on himself, and which harmonises perfectly with the principle of freedom.

MARX: You do not appear to have learned much from your experience of rebellions, Bakunin. Such movements could not prosper without a principle of authority. There must be officers even in the armies of anarchism.

BAKUNIN: Naturally at a time of military action, in the midst of a struggle, the roles are distributed in accordance with everyone's aptitudes, evaluated and judged by the whole movement. Some men direct and command, and others execute command. But no function remains fixed and petrified. Hierarchic order does not exist, the leader of today may become the subordinate tomorrow. No one is raised above others, and if he does rise for some little time, it is only to fall back later, like the waves in the sea, to the salutary level of equality.

MARX: Well, Bakunin, if you admit that direction and command are necessary during the struggle, then perhaps we may agree after all. I myself have always said that the dictatorship of the proletariat will only be needed during the preliminary stages of socialism. As soon as the classless society is matured, there will be no need for a state; in a phrase of my collaborator, Engels, the state will wither away.

BAKUNIN: There is not much indication of the state withering away in the *Communist Manifesto* that you and Engels wrote together. That is a marvellous pamphlet, and I should not have translated it if I did not admire it. But the fact remains that out of the ten points for the socialist programme which you outline in those pages, Marx, no fewer than nine call for the enlargement of the state—the state is to possess all the means of production, to control all commerce and credit, it is to impose forced labour and collect taxes, it is to monopolise the land, it is to control all means of transport and communication, and also it will run the schools and universities.

MARX: If you do not like that programme, you do not like socialism.

BAKUNIN: But that is not socialism, Marx; it is the most far-reaching form of statism—the usual German hankering for the big stick of the magnified state. Socialism means the control of industry and agriculture by the workers themselves.

MARX: A socialist state is a workers' state; they will control things indirectly.

BAKUNIN: But that is a typical illusion of bourgeois democratic theory that the people can control a state. In practice it is the state that

controls the people, and the more powerful the state, the more crushing its dominion. Look at what is happening in Germany. As the state grows, all the corruption that goes hand in hand with political centralisation is sweeping over a public that used to be the most honest in the world. What is more, monopoly capitalism is growing as fast as the state grows.

MARX: The growth of monopoly capitalism is paving the way for the coming of socialism. The reason why Russia is so far from socialism is that it is only beginning to emerge from feudalism.

BAKUNIN: The Russian people are closer to socialism than you realise, my dear Marx. The Russian peasants have their own tradition of revolution, and they have a great rôle to play in the liberation of mankind. The Russian revolution is rooted in the whole character of the people. In the seventeenth century the peasants rose in the South-East; and in the eighteenth century Pugachev led a peasants' revolt in the basin of the Volga which lasted for two years. The Russians will not shrink from violence. They know that the living fruit of human progress is watered with human blood. Nor do they shrink from fire. There was something truly Russian about the setting fire to Moscow which led to the defeat of Napoleon. Such are the fires in which the human race will be purged of the dross of slavery.

MARX: That sounds very dramatic, my friend; but the plain fact remains that socialism depends on the emergence of a class-conscious proletariat; and that is something which we can only expect in highly industrialised countries like England and Germany and France. The peasantry is the least organised and the least ready of all social classes for revolution. Peasants are even more backward than the Lumpenproletariat of the towns. They are natural barbarians or troglodytes.

BAKUNIN: That shows how much we differ, Marx. To me the flower of the proletariat does not consist, as it does for you, in the upper layer, in the skilled artisans of the factories, who are, in any case, semi-bourgeois in their outlook. I have known such men in the labour movement in Switzerland; and I can assure you that they are permeated with all the social prejudices, all the narrow aspirations and pretensions of the middle-classes. The skilled artisans are the least socialistic of the workers. To my eyes, Marx, the flower of the proletariat is the great mass, the rabble, the disinherited, wretched and illiterate millions that you speak of so contemptuously as the Lumpenproletariat.

MARX: You have clearly not given much thought to the concept of the proletariat. The proletariat is not the poor. There have always been poor people, but the proletariat is something new in history. It is not their poverty or wretchedness which makes men a proletariat. It is their indignation against the bourgeoisie; their defiance; their courage and their resolution to end their condition. A proletariat is created only when this inner indignation, this class-consciousness is added to poverty. The proletariat is the class with revolutionary ends, the class which aims at the destruction of all classes; the class which cannot emancipate itself without emancipating mankind as a whole.

BAKUNIN: But your socialist state will not eliminate classes, Marx. It

will create two classes; the rulers and the ruled. There will be a government which is to do much more than is done by any government known to exist at present. Then there will be the people who are governed. On the one hand the Left-wing intelligentsia—the most despotic, arrogant, self-opinionated kind of men who exist—they will command, in the name of knowledge; and on the other hand there will be the simple ignorant mass, who will obey.

MARX: The legislators and administrators of the socialist state will be the representatives of the people.

BAKUNIN: But that is another liberal illusion, namely that a government, issuing from popular elections, can represent the will of the people. Even Rousseau saw the folly of that idea. The instinctive aims of governing élites are always opposed to the instinctive aims of the common people. Looking at society from their exalted positions, they can hardly avoid adopting the attitude of the schoolmaster or the governess.

MARX: Liberal democracy cannot work because the political institutions are always manipulated by the financial power of the bourgeoisie.

BAKUNIN: Socialist democracy, so called, would be vitiated by other pressures. A parliament made up exclusively of workers—the self-same workers who are staunch socialists today—would become a parliament of aristocrats overnight. It has always been the way. Put radicals in positions of power in the state, and they become conservatives.

MARX: There are reasons for that.

BAKUNIN: The chief reason is that the democratic state is a contradiction in terms. The state entails authority, force, predominance, and therefore inequality. Democracy by definition entails equality. Therefore democracy and the state cannot exist together. Proudhon never said a truer word than when he said that universal suffrage is counter-revolutionary.

MARX: That is an exemplary half-truth, a characteristic product of Proudhon's journalistic mind. It is true that the workers are usually too oppressed by poverty, too easily influenced by the propaganda of the bourgeoisie, to make good use of the vote. But universal suffrage can be exploited for a socialist end. We can go into politics and help to make what is nominally democratic actually democratic. We cannot achieve all our ends by parliamentary means; but we can achieve a great deal.

BAKUNIN: No state—not even the reddest political republic—can give the people what they most need—that is freedom. Every state, including your socialist state, my dear Marx, is based on force.

MARX: What is the alternative to force?

BAKUNIN: Enlightenment.

MARX: But the people are not enlightened.

BAKUNIN: They can be educated.

MARX: Who is to educate them, if the state does not?

BAKUNIN: Society will educate itself. Unfortunately the governments of the world have left the people in such a state of profound ignorance

that it will be necessary to establish schools not only for the people's children, but for the people themselves. But these schools must be free from any taint of the principle of authority. They will not be schools at all in the conventional sense; they will be popular academies, and the pupils, being rich in experience, will be able to teach many things to their teachers, even as they are taught. In that way there would develop a sort of intellectual fraternity between them.

MARX: Well, at least you admit the two categories of teachers and taught. I do not myself see any great problem of education, once the socialist society has been created.

BAKUNIN: Yes, the first question is economic emancipation; and the rest will follow of itself.

MARX: It will not follow of itself unless the socialist state provides it. You have all the evidence of history to prove it. The most educated people in Europe today—the French and the Germans—owe their education to a strong state system of public instruction. In countries where the state provides no schools, the people are hopelessly illiterate.

BAKUNIN: The great schools and universities here in England are not controlled by the state.

MARX: They are dominated by the Church of England, which is worse; and which is part of the state, in any case.

BAKUNIN: The colleges of Oxford and Cambridge are governed by independent and self-perpetuating societies of scholars.

MARX: You know little of English life, Bakunin. Both Oxford and Cambridge have had to be radically reformed by Acts of Parliament. The State has intervened to save them from complete intellectual decay. They are backward enough as it is compared to German universities.

BAKUNIN: But their existence shows that it is possible for scholars to control their own colleges. And there is no reason why the workers should not administer their own farms and factories in the same way.

MARX: One day, no doubt, many such things will come about, but in the meantime a workers' state must replace the bourgeois owners until a better system is prepared.

BAKUNIN: That is the great difference between us, Marx. You believe that you must organise the workers to take possession of the state. I want to organise them to destroy, or, if you prefer a politer word, to liquidate the state. You want to make use of political institutions. I want to see the people federate themselves spontaneously, freely.

MARX: What does it mean to federate spontaneously?

BAKUNIN: Labour will organise itself. Productive associations based on mutual aid will be joined together in districts, and these districts will be freely combined in larger units. All power will come from below.

MARX: Such projects are utterly unrealistic. They are no different from the *phalansteres* and other duodecimal editions of the New Jerusalem proposed by utopian Socialists. They are all foolish, but they are not, unfortunately, harmless; because they introduce a spurious notion of socialism which may take the place of the real thing. And

in diverting men's attention from immediate conflict, their effect is conservative and reactionary.

BAKUNIN: One thing you cannot say about me, Marx, is that I divert men's attention from the immediate conflict. What is more, I think, as you do, that there are only two parties in the world: the party of revolution and the party of reaction. The peaceful socialists, with their co-operative societies and their model villages, belong to the party of reaction. The party of revolution is unfortunately already dividing itself into two factions: the champions of state socialism, which you represent, and the libertarian socialists, of which I am one. Your side has greater following, naturally, in Germany, and also here in England. But the socialists of Italy and Spain are libertarians almost to a man. So the question before us is: which side is going to prevail in the international workers' movement.

MARX: The genuinely socialist side, I hope; and not the anarchist side.

BAKUNIN: You call yours the genuinely socialist side because you deceive yourself about the nature of popular dictatorship. You do not realise the danger, but it would bring enslavement just as all other states have done.

MARX: You suppose that because the state has always been an instrument of class oppression, that it always must be? Can you not imagine the possibility of a different *kind* of state?

BAKUNIN: I can imagine one so different that it could not be called by the same name. There is room for something on the lines proposed by Proudhon—a sort of simple business office, a central clearing house at the service of society.

MARX: Perhaps that is all that every socialist society will ultimately have. There will come a time when the government of people will give way to the administration of things. But before the state can wither away it must be magnified.

BAKUNIN: That is not only paradoxical; it is contradictory.

MARX: But what if it is? You know your Hegel as well as I do. You know that the logic of history is the logic of contradiction. What we affirm, we also deny.

BAKUNIN: The argument may be good Hegel, but it is not good history. You will never destroy the state by enlarging it. I am your disciple, Marx. The longer I live, the more certain I am that you were right when you followed the great high road of economic revolution, and invited others to follow. But I shall never understand, or agree with, any of your authoritarian proposals.

MARX: If you are an anarchist, you cannot be my disciple. But perhaps I had better tell you in greater detail just where you go wrong. First of all, you speak of the principle of authority as if it were everywhere and in all circumstances wrong. That is a very superficial view. We live in an industrial age. Modern factories and mills where hundreds of workers supervise complicated machines have superseded the small workshops of the individual producers. Even agriculture is falling under the dominion of machines. Combined action displaces independent

anyone else. You think of each separate man, standing with all his rights, being menaced by social and collective institutions like the state. You never think, as a real socialist must think, of humanity as a whole, or of man as a creature inseparable from society.

BAKUNIN: There again, Marx, you show that you have either not listened to me or not understood what you have heard.

MARX: I fancy I have understood you better than you have understood yourself. If you cannot conceive of a state as anything but oppressive, that shows you cannot think of men as anything but isolated units, each with his own private will and desires and interests. This is how the theorists of bourgeois liberalism think; and you anarchists have just the same image of the human being and society. Your anarchism is only liberalism pushed to an extreme, pushed to a somewhat hysterical extreme, I might add. Your philosophy is essentially egoistic. You have a conception of the self, and of freedom for the self which belongs to the metaphysics of capitalism.

BAKUNIN: I am not interested in metaphysics.

MARX: But anarchism has its metaphysical assumptions, whether you choose to understand them or not. It also has its own ethics, which is very like Christian ethics. "Mutual aid", I hear you repeating; or you might put it in more conventional Christian terms and say "Love your neighbour" or "sacrifice yourself for others". But real socialism needs no such precepts because it does not recognise the isolation of the individual. In a socialist society, man is no longer alienated either from his neighbour or himself.

BAKUNIN: Since the state is the cause of their alienation—the obvious remedy is to eliminate it.

MARX: But we cannot eliminate it until we have removed the conditions which make the state a necessary outgrowth of society.

BAKUNIN: As soon as the workers' movement has recruited enough power to remove it, the state will cease to be necessary.

MARX: You admit it is necessary at present?

BAKUNIN: It is necessary to a property-owning society. Once private property has been redistributed; once socialism has triumphed . . .

MARX: But it is a very vulgar kind of socialism which is bothered about the redistribution of property. Surely, Bakunin, you are not one of those who thinks that socialism consists in the fair sharing of goods among individuals?

BAKUNIN: That is certainly one of its aims.

MARX: My friend, the aim of socialism is far more radical than that. Its aim is to bring about a complete transformation of human nature, a change of the self, the creation of a new man. The individual will be fused into society. Each will be freed from his self-alienation. You tell me your own goal is freedom. Socialism will bring a freedom which is quite unknown in the past experience of mankind.

BAKUNIN: You make freedom too mysterious a thing.

MARX: And you make it too commonplace a thing. As you look at the world, Bakunin, you imagine that some people are free to-day and some oppressed.

BAKUNIN: I do not imagine it. It is so. The few are free. The rich.

MARX: I tell you that *nobody* is free in the world today. Not even the richest bourgeois. Morally speaking, the capitalist, as a man, is as much a slave of the system as the workers are. This is what enables us to say, with truth, that the emancipation of the proletariat means the emancipation of mankind.

BAKUNIN: But the hard fact remains that at present the rich man can do what he likes, while the poor man cannot even get what he needs.

MARX: But the rich man's choice is governed and restricted by the bourgeois culture, by a system which denies the humanity of everyone. Besides, it is a very narrow theory of freedom which defines it as doing what you want to do.

BAKUNIN: But it is better than the theory of freedom which defines freedom as doing what you ought to do. That is what the priests say—the service of the Church is perfect freedom; and what Hegel says, obedience to the state is perfect freedom. Personally I'd rather have the plain man's notion that liberty is doing what you want to do.

MARX: But you yourself have just defined liberty as the fulfilment of the potentialities in man. And that is much closer to the goal of socialism. The socialist man will be free because he will be a changed man.

BAKUNIN: But if men are not left alone to develop themselves they will not realise the best that is in them.

MARX: There you are, Bakunin, betraying your bourgeois liberal philosophy in bourgeois liberal words. For is that not just what Adam Smith and all his kind say? Leave men alone and each will do the best he can for himself? The economic man will have his own incentive to self-improvement? What is the phrase "*Laissez nous faire . . .*"?

BAKUNIN: Of course, if you choose to ignore the fact that the liberals stand for private property and competitive economy, while I believe in everything being held in common. . . .

MARX: But if your overriding principle is that every man must have his precious private right to freedom unrestrained, then you will soon find there are those who want to abstract something from the common pool and claim it as their own. For you cannot have at the same time complete individual liberty and no individual property. For what could you say to the man who claimed the right to property? Or rather, not what would you say to him, but what would you *do* to him, if you had no state or any other instrument of socialist authority to restrain recalcitrant or anti-social individuals?

BAKUNIN: But you yourself, Marx, have said that socialist man will be a changed man. He will no longer have the egoistic, acquisitive, unnatural impulses which are generated by life in bourgeois society.

MARX: My kind of socialist man will be changed, Bakunin. But I do not recognise your kind as socialist man at all. You think of men as individuals, each with his little empire of rights. I think of humanity as a whole. Freedom, as I see it, is the liberation of mankind; not the liberty of the individual.

BAKUNIN: But that is Hegel's notion of freedom again. The idea that acting freely is acting morally, and acting morally is acting in accordance with the principle of reason which is embodied in the state.

MARX: Hegel was not altogether wrong. Only a rational being can be free, because only a rational being can make a choice between alternatives. An irrational choice is not a free choice. To act freely is to act rationally. And to act rationally is to acknowledge the necessity of nature and of history. There is no real antithesis between necessity and freedom.

BAKUNIN: But we are not talking about the question of the freedom of the will, Marx. What we are considering is political freedom. There is nothing metaphysical or difficult about that. Political freedom depends on the removal of political oppression. One does not need any philosophical training to see that. A child of nine can look at the world and see who is oppressed and who are the oppressors.

MARX: And a child of nine might well suppose that the situation could be briskly remedied by doing away with the state. He might well become an anarchist. And his tender years would excuse his folly.

BAKUNIN: There is the folly of the philosopher as well as the folly of the child. All your abstruse reasoning about liberty can only take you where it took Rousseau and Hegel: to the belief that men can be forced to be free.

MARX: Of course men can be forced to be free, in the sense that you can force them to act rationally—or at any rate prevent them from acting irrationally.

BAKUNIN: But a freedom which can be imposed on a man is not worth the name of freedom.

MARX: It is reality that matters, not names.

BAKUNIN: Well, look at reality then. If you talk about forcing men to be free you must be thinking about two classes of people—the one who does the forcing and the one who has his freedom forced upon him. And there you have the two types who make up the so-called classless society of authoritarian socialism: the rules and the ruled, those on top, and those below.

MARX: Of course some people must be superior to others. As I have said to you before, a socialist society must be regulated, especially in the early stages. The alternative is the Tower of Babel, a world in which no one knows what to do, or what to expect; a world where there is no order, no security, or reliance on settled and fixed arrangements. Anarchy means chaos; and chaos appals me. If it appeals to you, Bakunin, it is because you are susceptible to the meretricious charm of Bohemian or gypsy life. After the rigidity of your early life, with your upper-class family and your military schools, it may be only natural that Bohemian disorder should attract you. But if you reflect upon it you will see that Bohemianism is really only an elaborate tribute to the bourgeois ethos, studiously defying and outraging it. But I tell you, the bourgeois ethos is not worth such attention. The socialist has more serious things to think about.

BAKUNIN: You speak of "vulgar socialism" Marx, but you yourself have a vulgar notion of what anarchism means. To the uneducated mind the word "anarchy" means just chaos or disorder. But an educated man must know that the word is only a transliteration from the Greek and that it means nothing more than opposition to government. It is pure superstition to assume that the absence of government means the presence of chaos or disorder. The most orderly nations in Europe to-day are not those where the government bears most heavily upon the public, but those where its pressure is felt the least. As for what you say about Bohemianism, I do not understand you; I certainly have no relish for disorder.

MARX: But you have spoken eagerly enough about blood and fire and destruction.

BAKUNIN: That is mere zeal for battle. I may be more impatient for the coming of the revolution than you are, Marx; but I can assure you that the anarchist yearns as much as you do for the tranquility of the socialist order.

MARX: It is no use you yearning for it; because without the socialist state you will not have it. Your kind of revolution will bring blood and fire and destruction, assuredly; but it will not bring much else.

BAKUNIN: And your kind of revolution, Marx, will bring something infinitely worse, and that is slavery.

MARX: Well, my friend, I fancy it is a good thing that we have both been persecuted by the bourgeois; otherwise, if we continued this conversation much longer, we might both of us cease to be socialists.

BAKUNIN: I must ring for more hot water. The tea has got stone cold.

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Authoritarians and Libertarians

Authoritarians believe societies are exquisitely fragile and must be guarded at all costs against disruption and confusion. Libertarians hold that human societies are constantly changing, and that the material and spiritual factors determining change must be rediscovered in each generation if societies are not to fossilise and die. Authoritarians hold to given laws, and libertarians that they must endlessly be questioned and remade. Neither attitude is ignoble, and I expect the battle between them is eternal. It began in Eden, when Eve challenged the authority by which Adam was prepared perpetually to abide. She started us on the voyage of self-discovery and attendant error, and her children are mystics, philosophers, artists and men of science. But Adam's descendants, hankering for lost certainties, seek to curb Eve's and guide us back to lost stabilities. The symbol of the ultimate victory of the libertarian spirit is that, despite the power of authority, Eve not only ate the apple but persuaded poor Adam to bite it too.

—COLIN MACINNES in *New Society* 8/11/62.

The role of relationships in society

RONALD HARVEY

RELATIONSHIP, *n.* the state of being related by kindred, affinity, or other alliance. (Nuttall's Dictionary). Relationships are the cement in the structure of society. By a study of relationships one can orientate man's place in society and in the world. "The realm of human affairs, strictly speaking, consists," says Hannah Arendt, "of the web of human relationships which exist wherever men live together . . ." ¹

There are many kinds of relationships but they can roughly be classed in two groups—vertical and horizontal. Vertical relationships are those which operate *de haut en bas* and conversely; they tend to be despotic or hierarchical. In horizontal relationships equality, reciprocity and co-operation are evident qualities. The former is illustrated by the relationship between parent and child, employer and employee, gaoler and prisoner, government and the governed. The latter is manifest in the relationship between equal partners, husband and wife, friend and friend, colleague and colleague. Misuse of the former on the grand scale may lead to despotism, oppression and revolt: of the latter to rivalry and bitter competition. Both can lead to war, but to different types of war. The war which aims at the subjugation or annihilation of a whole people is a vertical war. A war of mutual fear and defence can be termed a horizontal war. A horizontal war when one side has gained the upper hand and prosecutes it *à outrance* may develop into a vertical one.

Man is in constant relationship with those over him and those under him, as well as those with him and those against him. Without becoming a hermit he cannot escape such relationships. It is on how he deals with such relationships that the kind of society in which he lives depends. It determines the kind of society, the laws and conventions of that society and the behaviour of members of that society within such conventions. Needless to say the sort of relationships he adopts within a society are in their turn dependent to a large extent on fundamental instincts and on the sort of person he is, while the framework of his society has been built up by relationships achieved and developed by his forbears.

Relationships may also be considered from a different aspect—as limited, narrow or closed on the one hand, or free, broad and largely unconditioned on the other. In the former the gamut is run from almost pure selfishness ("I'm all right Jack"), through the family, the clan or

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tribe, the class and the nation. It tends to be strict; strong within its limits, almost non-existent outside them. In the latter, which at its best may be described in the words of Donne "No man is an island . . .", one runs the danger of formlessness and over-diffusion, a woolly feeling of concern for everyone and everything without discrimination.

The former kind which takes the view, in the narrowest sense, that everyman is an island naturally tends to insularity and isolationism. It is of necessity concentrated and by that much the more powerful. It results in strong family ties, clannishness, intense patriotism and, at its worst, privilege, nepotism, jingoism, chauvinism, racialism, pogroms, colour bars, apartheid and war. Those who seek predominantly this form of relationship tend to authoritarianism, oligarchy and the political right. Economically they believe in competition which in its more ruthless aspects develops into an economic cannibalism in which the weakest are swallowed up. The broader form of relationship, on the other hand, tends to democracy, social and racial equality, internationalism and the political left. Being centrifugal where the former is centripetal, altruistic rather than autistic, diffuse rather than concentrated it tends to fail in action through dissipation of strength over a broad front; the tendency of conservative ranks to close and of those of the left to split are illustrations of both types of relationship. In the economic field the latter type rejects competition for co-operation. If the motto of the former is "Charity begins at home", the taunt directed at the latter is "They love every country but their own."

The difference between the two types of relationship is further pointed in the support given by those in favour of strict, narrow relationships for capital punishment, flogging and militarism, whereas those who favour the broader type are, generally speaking, abolitionists. If they admit the necessity for prisons nevertheless it is from their ranks that come the advocates of penal reform.

There is, however, yet another aspect of relationship which is both more fundamental and less obvious. At the level of the individual it is the extent to which one man regards another as a human being like himself (a relationship which demands understanding and co-operation, if not anything closer) or, conversely as a unit, a cipher, an object (a relationship, if such it can be called, suited primarily for exploitation and use). In the latter case the person becomes an obstacle to, or an instrument for, one's own aims and interests, a statistical unit to be manipulated as any other such unit, a phenomenon to be recorded in a case history or even to disappear completely as a "case", a unit of labour to be taken up or put down and left like any other tool. As Peter Townsend has said, "Everything turns on the way people behave to each other. The handicapped for example, still are treated too often as second class citizens who have no rights and no feelings. I once went round an old people's home with a matron who swept into rooms and lavatories without making any apology to the people who were sometimes there. I saw one of her staff changing an old man's trousers in full view of thirty other people in the room. In another home the warden, an ex-army officer, took me into a room where there were a

dozen aged women. He stood and pointed at each one in turn, saying in a loud voice, 'That's eighty-five, that's eighty-eight, that's ninety-two . . .'.²

This depersonalisation of human beings into objects of experience, instruments for use or ciphers to be manipulated is very noticeable in the social services and in relationships between employer and employed, and it appears to be increasing. It is observable in many works of sociology where it is used quite legitimately but often with little attempt to bring it all down to earth, to the differing needs, feelings and aspirations of living people, since it is so much easier to think of them and deal with them under a convenient label. One can then shift them about like merchandise, pigeon-hole them if the problems are too difficult and avoid contact with them since contact and understanding appear increasingly unnecessary the more they are regarded as "units", "cases", "redundant labour" and so on. The very word "redundancy" illustrates this tendency. "Unemployed" indicates that there are not enough jobs for workers and this implies criticism of the system. "Redundant" means that there are too many workers for the jobs and throws the onus on the worker as an unnecessary supernumerary unit in the industrial set-up. "Redundant" sounds better to the employer and has not the emotive power to cause trouble; but a redundant worker is just as unemployed for all that. And so it goes on. In this flight from reality any word, any method that tends to abstract and depersonalize is preferred to human contact and understanding. Moreover depersonalization is a valuable weapon in the armoury of authority, of manipulators of public opinion, of economic exploitation, of racialism and of the cold war; for to consider and treat human beings as human beings would render such manipulation difficult if not impossible.

This question of relationships is important politically for it is the way in which we regard others which helps to determine the political framework. If the climate of relationship is overwhelmingly authoritarian in character the political system it tends to foster will also be authoritarian; and conversely, such a system will perpetuate the climate. Erich Fromm has pointed out that the authoritarian character is at base sado-masochistic. "The sado-masochistic person is always characterized by his attitude towards authority. He admires authority and tends to submit to it, but at the same time he wants to be an authority himself and have others submit to him." Again Fromm states: "For the authoritarian character there exist so to speak, two sexes: the powerful ones and the powerless ones. His love, admiration and readiness for submission are automatically aroused by power, whether of a person or of an institution. Power fascinates him not for any values for which a specific power may stand, but just because it is power. Just as his 'love' is automatically aroused by power, so powerless people or institutions automatically arouse his contempt. The very sight of a powerless person makes him want to attack, dominate, humiliate him. Whereas a different kind of character is appalled by the idea of attacking one who is helpless, the authoritarian character feels the more aroused the more helpless his object has become."³ In so far

as this is true it poses a problem for non-violent action. By how much is the authoritarian attitude subverted or disarmed by such action? And how much does it depend on the real or apparent strength of those adopting the technique of non-violence?

The sort of political system arising out of the authoritarian character is exemplified in the Nazism of Hitler and the Nationalist "apartheid" policies of Verwoerd. It is responsible for colonialism at its worst and most oppressive. In more liberal forms of colonialism it produces a kind of paternalism which is however none the less authoritarian at root, and which refrains from oppression only as long as the colonized remain content with what the colonizers consider to be their proper station in life, *i.e.*, loyal and obedient subjects permanently arrested at a lower standard of civilization and development.

In its relations with hostile countries and authoritarian character can only contemplate domination or destruction. It does not seek even reluctant acceptance of the fact that we all have to live together whatever our ideologies. It sees everything in blacks and whites . . . "the only good German is a dead German" . . . "delenda est Carthago."

The authoritarian character both produces and is a product of vertical relationships. Its master-slave mentality does not and cannot envisage any balanced relationship between equals. It is the implacable enemy of freedom. "Freedom is freedom," wrote Berdyaev, "not only from the masters but from the slaves also. The master is determined from without; the master is not a personality, just as the slave is not a personality. Only the free man is a personality, and he is that even if the whole world should wish to enslave him . . . A man gets into the position of master over some other man because in accordance with the structure of his consciousness he has become a slave to the will of mastership. The same power by which he enslaves another enslaves himself also. A free man does not desire to lord it over anyone . . ."⁴

In a horizontal relationship which leads to conflict each side respects the other as an equal and each may indeed grudgingly admire the other, for each is a reflection of the other. In a vertical relationship the one despises and attempts to humiliate the other or even destroy him. In horizontal conflicts the prospects of an understanding and an equitable settlement are relatively good. In vertical conflicts they are inconceivable for such peace as may be won can only be imposed by force, never by mutual agreement.

There is a state or condition of relationship, whether vertical or horizontal, which occupies a disproportionately large place in contemporary affairs—that of opposition. Opposition is a form of relationship in which the opposing parties have certain similarities. Indeed it is the similarities which are the origin of the opposition. Whether it is in a dispute over property, or in an antagonism between two people who cannot stand each other, the link and, at the same time, the rift is identity of interest or similarity.

A woman is upset or infuriated when confronted by another wearing an identical dress or hat. It is the similarity which is galling; it is being confronted with another version of oneself. Without some

similarity of condition, of aims or of interests there is no real opposition. Instead there is disinterest. It is difficult to get two disinterested parties to fight for the relationship is minimal and there is nothing common to fight about. Opposition implies a close, often compulsive relationship.

In Plato's allegorical explanation of the origin of sex, male and female eternally seek their complement in the opposite sex. Opposition embraces both the idea of separation and the idea of completion. At one and the same time both sides are split apart and attracted together. One sees in one's opponent what one lacks in oneself, or what one despises in oneself. The conscious, accepted, approved portion of one's psyche is opposing the unconscious, despised, repressed portion. Unconsciously the latter is projected onto one's opponent. One can then hate him openly which is much easier and more pleasant than hating oneself.

One can observe this compulsive love-hate relationship in play between the two great powers of East and West, the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. The more acute the rift between them the more closely they tend to resemble each other. This polarity of attraction and repulsion with its accompanying tension is responsible for the cold war and mutual threats of nuclear destruction. The secret of the peaceful resolution of such a relationship lies in the idea of completion, which is part of it albeit often unrecognised. Completion implies that East should find its complement in West and conversely, *i.e.*, what it lacks, not what it despises in itself. But in order to do this each side must have the courage to face the repressed and disowned side of its own nature. To most governments, however, the prospect of this would be so horrifying that anything short of war, to some even war itself, would seem preferable. Happily for them, though unfortunately for the world at large, the maintenance of a high level of tension renders the prospect of such excruciating soul-baring unlikely if not impossible.

What I have attempted to outline is of course only a slim framework of the intricate web of relationships linking man with his fellows, individually as well as collectively. Nevertheless from this admittedly over-simple assessment emerge four clear dangers for social and international understanding. These are authoritarianism, narrow autistic relationships, depersonalization and that form of compulsive opposition resulting from the projection of one's own faults onto one's opponent. It is true that these dangers have always been with us and civilization though it has suffered as a result, has not died: but now there is little room for manoeuvre left. In this nuclear age, unless we can make some progress towards overcoming them, our future is likely to be brutish and of short duration.

1. Hannah Arendt: **The Human Condition.**
2. Peter Townsend: **A Society for People (in Conviction).**
3. Fromm: **The Fear of Freedom.**
4. Nicolas Berdyaev: **Slavery and Freedom.**

The ethics of egoism

DONALD ROOUM

EMILE ARMAND, IN HIS YOUTH, joined the Salvation Army. Then he studied Tolstoy and became a Christian anarchist. Finally, still in his youth, he became an anarchist individualist, and so remained until he died, at the age of 90. I am told by one learned in such matters, a Freudian could deduce, from the above facts alone, that Emile Armand had a strong father fixation. This gives me the confidence to voice a speculation of my own, formulated while I was reading a new pamphlet of translations from his work.*

I reckon he shared, with many saints of several religions, a profound longing to define what was admirable in human behaviour, and make this the pattern of his own behaviour. The strict moral code was what attracted him to the Sally Bash. He resigned to become a Christian anarchist when Tolstoy showed him how quasi-military ritual actually hindered strict ethical behaviour. And finally, when the study of Stirner and Nietzsche showed him that external moral forces also hindered personal responsibility, he gave up Christianity itself.

The essays in Sid Parker's pamphlet are translated by three different writers and taken from two different periodicals. But all of them are on the subject of ethics. (The essay from *Resistance*, titled 'The Future Society' is about 'the future humanity that individualists want'.) Instead of a mere memorial to a prolific anarchist writer, Parker has assembled a coherent and timely work on anarchism as a way of life.

Armand was a thorough-going anarchist; an honest believer in individual aspiration as the source of social harmony; one of those referred to by Bob Green in ANARCHY 16 as, 'the egotistic (*sic*) anarchists whose declared over-riding concern is with Number One'. His 'individualism' was synonymous with Stirner's 'conscious egoism', and the 'egoism in sense 2' which the *Shorter Oxford Dictionary* defines as: '*Ethics*. The theory which regards self-interest as the foundation of morality. Also, in practical sense; regard to one's own interest, systematic selfishness.

'Our kind of individualist', he wrote, 'recognizes as a motive nothing outside himself.' Presumably he preferred the word 'individualism' because 'egoism' is so easily confused with 'egoism in senses 1, 3 and 4' (to say nothing of 'egotism'), besides being open to deliberate misrepresentation.

There would appear to be a section of self styled anarchists who have taken over from the authoritarian socialists, who in turn adopted it from the Christians, the equation of selfishness with cynical sensuality.

**Anarchism and Individualism*, three essays by E. Armand; published by S. E. Parker, 75 Cotswold Road, Bristol 3; 1s. or 25 cents. Available Freedom Press.

These are the woolly-minded anarchists who think the egoist doesn't give a damn for anyone else. They might be surprised to find Armand, who openly 'recognizes as a motive nothing outside himself', boasting that 'our conception of comradeship raises itself like a lighthouse to remind the world that there are still persons capable of resisting the seductions and gross appetites of our philistine society'. Yet he shows quite clearly how self-interest leads to propaganda and the practice of mutual aid:

'Tending to live his own individual life at the risk of clashing intellectually, morally and economically with his environment, the anarchist individualist tries to create in the same environment, by means of selection, individuals who like himself are free from the prejudices and superstitions of authority, in order that the greatest possible number of men may actually live their own lives, uniting through personal affinities to practise their conceptions as far as possible. As individuals of his own "species" increase, so the power of environment over his own life diminishes'.

That 'the egoist is more willing and eager than the humanist to give free reign to his aggressive impulses' is clearly shown to be a misunderstanding; and the question of how Armand's anarchist would choose 'given a clear choice between personal happiness and the happiness of others' is one which cannot arise. Were any man so 'niggardly of heart', so lacking in common sympathy as to be aware of such a choice, 'he would feel himself incomplete', and could not be an egoist. For the egoist must feel self-sufficient.

'This explains his plan for freeing his world of useless and avoidable suffering. He knows that this is possible when one prefers agreement to struggle, abstention to the unlatching of actions dictated by bitterness, animosity or spite.'

Armand admits the existence of 'armchair Nietzscheans or weekend Stirnerites' whose conception of egoism does not include a strict code of personal integrity, but he rejects them:

'The individualist as we know him abominates brutes, cretins, schemers, rogues, twisters, skunks and so forth, no matter with what ideology they wish to conceal themselves.'

The integrity he wants, however, is strictly a matter of self-interest, quite different from submission to collective morality.

'The anarchist regulates his life not according to the law, like the legalists, nor according to a given collective mystique like the religious, the nationalists or the socialists, but according to his own needs and personal aspirations. He is ready to make the concessions necessary to live with his comrades or his friends, but without making an obsession of these concessions . . .

'Instead of postponing individual happiness to the socialist or communist calends, he extols his present achievement of it by proclaiming the joy of living . . .

The anarchists go forward, and by living for themselves, these egoists, they dig the furrow, they open the breach through which will pass the unique ones who will succeed them.'

Snapshot Album

compiled by
Geoffrey Minish

In the meantime, there was nothing to do save to work with the dead for allies, and at odds with the ignorance of most of the living, that that edifice, so many times begun, so discouragingly reduced to ruins, might yet stand as the headquarters of humanity . . .

EDMUND WILSON

Why shouldn't a man who drinks champagne, plays bingo, and speculates in property *also* be against the space race and fight for better public education and health services?¹

★

"You know, Yeats didn't have a five-pound note until he was over forty. He told me that himself."²

★

"But, as I see it, a poet is just the man most highly qualified for dealing with words, all words. Now I am working on the Midlands Electricity and VP Wine accounts."³

★

Q. Do you know there are two kinds of perspiration?

A. It's true! One is "physical", caused by work, heat or exertion; the other is "nervous", stimulated by emotion or sexual excitement. It's the kind that comes at moments when you are tense or emotionally excited.⁴

★

The mother of a college sophomore said her daughter confessed that she just couldn't go back to college still a virgin.⁵

★

Does Mr. Morgan, or anyone else outside the schools, realise that about one-third of the population is practically illiterate and can only be reached through the medium of sound accompanied picture and not through the printed word? The TV commercial is the most powerful way of keeping these viewers up to date with new products, of developing a critical appraisal of what is offered for sale, and of setting standards of personal taste and hygiene, and in so doing the programme contractors have a recognised responsibility which on the whole they serve well.⁶

★

The Season will almost certainly break a girl of any craving she might formerly have had for champagne. She will become permanently bored with it and find water more exciting.⁷

★

"I can understand that noise may be a nuisance to some people, especially if they are trying to work. But I like it. I would rather it was noisy than quiet. I can't stand silence."⁸

After a fanfare by trumpeters of the Royal Artillery, Mrs. Parnes cut the Celebration Cake, fashioned as a *chemin de fer* table. *Chef de pâtissier* Eric Williams used 600 eggs in making the three 112-lb. identical cakes ordered for the celebrations. 80-lb. of marzipan were needed for the green "baize" covers, the Casino chips and the full pack of cards.

The court cards were a work of art in icing and the cakes took nearly three weeks to prepare.⁹

★

"I remember when we were playing the Yacht Club. All the publishers used to go there. They liked Fats and they'd all want his songs. I remember one night when he played 'If I Had You.' He started crying. It turned out he was thinking about his earlier days and about all the hits he had given away. Jack Robbins, the music publisher, once told me that, if Fats had completed all the songs he'd gotten advances on, Robbins would be a millionaire again."¹⁰

★

APPIN—Retiring master William T. May was presented with a gold past masters' jewel by the Appin Preceptory Royal Black Knights of Ireland. The presentation was made by the Right Wor. Past Grand Master Sir Knight James Warrell.

Sir Knight Mr. May was congratulated on not missing a July 12 celebration for the past sixty years.¹¹

★

Harewood also has an Hanoverian impatience and temper, especially liable to be provoked by a slovenly waiter or mediocre *maitre d'hotel*. He believes, quite rightly, that one has a duty to voice one's complaints and that unless certain standards are insisted on all of us in this country will end up conforming to canteen food foraged from a chromium-plated trough. His comments in restaurants often embarrass more timid companions.¹²

★

"Bobby", he said, "bread is your only friend."¹³

★

He died penniless, having survived on city welfare checks these past years. A few days after his death the city claimed his trombone and personal belongings.¹⁴

★

"A chap was arrested after the attempt on de Gaulle, and when he was picked up in a café he said: 'At seventeen I wasn't afraid of anything. Now at thirty-five I fear everything.'¹⁵

★

"When Mr. Miller was on trial for contempt of Congress, a certain corporation executive said either he named names and I got him to name names, or I was finished."¹⁶

Unlike Chessman, who was detested by all who understood him, Paul Crump has thousands of friends to plead for his life, among them powerful newspaper editors, hundreds of clergymen, and the warden of the jail, a former policeman.¹⁷

★

Canon R. L. Hussey (Manchester) said the Bishop of Durham's speech reminded him of a prison governor's observation: "It is in the condemned cell that the gospel comes into its own."¹⁸

★

"There is at least the possibility that the nuclear bomb may eventually be a schoolmaster leading men to Christ." The Archbishop of Wales, Dr. Morris, urged the Governing Body of the Church in Wales to ponder the possibility in his presidential address today.¹⁹

★

The real blow came in 1958 when he suffered a stroke which impaired the co-ordination of his hands so that playing became nearly impossible. Today, Pete Johnson is still a sick man with heavy medical bills. He recently tried to apply for Social Security disability benefits, but he was told that before he could collect he must establish that payments had been made to his Social Security account by his employers during the two years preceding his crippling stroke. He discovered that the club owners he had worked for had deducted the tax from his pay but had never turned it in to the government. Therefore he was ineligible for disability benefits.²⁰

1. Peter Green, in *The Listener*.
2. Sean O'Casey, quoted in *The Guardian*.
3. Edward Lucie-Smith, quoted in *The Sunday Times*.
4. Text of an Arrid advertisement.
5. "The Moral Disarmament of Betty Coed", by Gloria Steinem, published in *Esquire*.
6. A letter in the *Financial Times*.
7. *The Tatler*.
8. A 20-year-old girl bank clerk, quoted by the *Daily Herald*.
9. A report in the *Brighton & Hove Herald*.
10. Gene Sedric, quoted in *Hear Me Talkin' To Ya*, edited by Nat Shapiro and Nat Hentoff.
11. A report in the *Windsor Daily Star*.
12. Ronald Duncan, in *The Sunday Times*.
13. Charlie Parker, quoted by Robert George Reisner in *Eddie Condon's Treasury of Jazz*.
14. "Miff Mole", by Jack Bradley, published in *Jazz Journal*.
15. Francois Truffaut, quoted in *Sight and Sound*.
16. Marilyn Monroe, quoted by *Life*.
17. A caption in *Life*.
18. A report in *The Times*.
19. Ditto.
20. "Pete Johnson: Jazz Pianist", by H. A. Woodfin, published in *Jazz Monthly*.

Anarchist history: some recent books

A FIVE-HUNDRED PAGE PAPERBACK, *Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements* by George Woodcock has just been published in America (Meridian Books 1962, \$1.95). It is not available in Britain but we learn that it is to appear here as a Penguin book next year.

There are persistent rumours that James Joll, the author of a history of the Second International is also preparing a history of anarchism.

Kropotkin's *Memoirs of a Revolutionist* in a one-volume abridged edition edited by James Allen Rogers, has been published in America as a paperback (Anchor Books 1962, \$1.45—available in England from Freedom Bookshop at 10s.) The editor has added an epilogue, largely about Kropotkin's attitude to the Bolshevik revolution, and has also replaced pseudonyms (which Kropotkin used to avoid compromising friends) by the actual names.

Among great autobiographical works of nineteenth-century Russia, Kropotkin's memoirs are second only to those of Alexander Herzen. Six years ago, in his introduction to Herzen's *From the Other Shore* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1956), Isaiah Berlin called the memoirs (*My Past and Thoughts*), a literary and political masterpiece, "comparable in quality and scope with *War and Peace*". The six little volumes of Constance Garnett's translation have long been out of print, and the three volume revised translation which will appear this winter from Chatto and Windus will be very welcome.

Emma Goldman, whose activity as an anarchist propagandist spanned the years from the desperate struggles of the American labour movement in the eighties and nineties of the last century to the tragic end of the Spanish civil war in 1939, is celebrated in Richard Drinnon's immensely intelligent and thoughtful biography *Rebel in Paradise* (University of Chicago Press, \$5.95, London 1961, 48s.) Reviewing this book in the *Sunday Times*, Goronwy Rees wrote "Her exuberant and overpowering vitality, her courage and audacity in defending the individual against the State, even her notorious series of love affairs, in which she combined sexual energy with compassion and sympathy, made this short, stout, bespectacled little woman, who spent her life on public platforms preaching hopeless causes, in prisons, exile, hardship and contumely, one of the great women of her age; and somehow Mr. Drinnon has succeeded in making us understand why this should be so."

The French edition of Bakunin's works reached six volumes, published by P. V. Stock, Paris between 1895 and 1913. For this reason, when the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam decided to begin the publication of the Bakunin Archives—the vast collection of manuscript material which was amassed by Max Nettlau and is housed in the Institute, it was thought best to begin with previously unpublished sources. The series as a whole will comprise about fifteen

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volumes, edited by A. Lehning, A. J. C. Rüter, and P. Scheibert. The first volume, which appeared last year, edited and annotated by Dr. Arthur Lehning is *Michel Bakounine et l'Italie (1871-1872, Première partie La Polémique avec Mazzini. Ecrits et matériaux.* (Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1961, 55 florins).

It is intended to devote each volume to one or more special themes, although a chronological order will be observed as far as possible. Variant readings, as well as Bakunin's correspondence will be included. The first two volumes will gather together all the material dealing with the social and religious ideas of Mazzini, and with the birth of Italian socialism. The third volume will contain one of Bakunin's most considerable manuscripts, the "Lettre aux compagnons de la Fédération du Jura" (1872) discussing pan-Slavism. The fourth volume will include the Russian text and a French translation of "The State and Anarchy" (1873).

Some interesting double-think about anarchism appears in a long article by O. Mandic in "Anarchism as a Social Phenomenon" in the Yugoslav *Arhiv za Pravne i drustveve Nauke* (Jan.-June, 1960). His argument is as follows: "Anarchism as an ideology emerged as a necessary, though temporary tactic which was linked to the interests and the era of the *petite bourgeois* and that of the proletariat, who were joined in a common struggle against the political forces in various European countries. At the same time, the proletarian ideology of Marxism, which formulated the scientific laws governing social development and which established the bases for political activity by the proletariat, had not yet been fully constructed. Anarchism, which formally rejected the notion of the state, in actual practice reinforced the existence of the state by stimulating the state to organise its forces against anarchism and at the same time attacking the progressive movements of the proletariat."

Michael Bakunin

MARXISM, FREEDOM AND THE STATE

This collection of extracts from the works of Michael Bakunin has been translated and edited, with a biographical essay, by K. J. Kenafick. The contents are taken largely from those writings of Bakunin touching on his controversy with Marx and therefore belong to the years 1870-72 but the passages dealing with the nature and characteristics of the State in general are mostly taken from *Federalism, Socialism and Anti-Theologianism*, written in 1867, and based as the title indicates on the close connection, in Bakunin's view, between the State and religion.

In the ninety or so years since these passages were written, the worship of the State has *become* a religion over a very large part of the globe, and we have seen in practice the fulfilment of Bakunin's gloomy forebodings on the destination of Marxist socialism. History itself has given point and piquancy to his neglected but prophetic polemics.

64 pp.

Demy 8vo

five shillings

FREEDOM PRESS