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[Editorial Note by Jeff Stein: Sam Dolgoff anticipated many of the criticisms Murray Bookchin was to make in *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: An Unbridgeable Chasm* (1995). Dolgoff rightly predicted that the youth rebellion of the 1960s would have to confront the same problems of work and survival that older anarchists had grappled with, as these "new anarchists" left the universities and campuses. Bookchin never admitted that Sam had been right all along when Bookchin concluded that "spontaneity" was not enough but organization with a constructive program is needed to build a movement to make a social revolution.]

American anarchists do not constitute an organized movement, but rather an assortment of scattered ephemeral, ad hoc, grouplets reflecting all shades of "anarchism", from right-wing laissez faire "libertarian capitalists" to extreme "left-wing" anarcho-individualists[sic]. They are chaotic mixture of disparate elements more agreed on what they are AGAINST than what they are FOR. "Anarchism's contemporary revival [writes Kingsley Martin] mostly comes from the dissident middle-class intellectuals, students and other marginal groups…who base themselves on individualist, utopian, non-working-class elements…" (*The Nation*, November 16, 1970).

While many new anarchists, unlike the laissez-faire anarchists, do not deny the link between free socialism and anarchism, they nevertheless repudiated the classical anarchism of Bakunin and Kropotkin insofar as too much emphasis was laid on the labor movement as a revolutionary force. There had always been a strong anti-syndicalist current in the old anarchist

movement and the younger anarchists unconsciously echoed these views.

More recently, the anarchist David Wieck, (*Anarchy* No. 8 London, 1972) referred to how the anarchist journal *Resistance* (ceased publication in the 1950s) anticipated the ideas of the new anarchists. He recalled that: "…among the ideas generally accepted in the youthful milieu in the 1940s and early 1950s was the…critique of Marxist and Anarcho-Syndicalist ideas of the 'working class'…"

Wieck's attitudes towards a number of anarchist problems are almost identical to the views held by the new generation of anarchists. Anarchism is not regarded as a social-revolutionary movement with a mass base, but as a sort of semi-religious formula for personal salvation, defined by Wieck as: "…personalist individualism…a general orientation of an individual's life, rather than a set ideology…" Wieck's attitude illustrates a chronic affliction which to a great extent still plagues the new anarchism: regression to primitive forms of social organization; an infantile rejection of any form of organization much above the level of town-hall meetings and an intimate circle of friends, now called "affinity groups". The obvious contradiction between these ideas and an ambivalent if not permissive attitude toward dictatorial "third world" regimes (Cuba, North Vietnam, China, etc.) can only be ascribed to revolutionary euphoria and indifference to theory.

The new libertarian communes and "affinity groups" owe their existence to disappointment over their inability to shake the system by campus rebellions, demonstrations, direct confrontations with the military at induction centers, etc. Many young rebels became escapists who hoped that

"The Establishment" would be gradually undermined of enough people followed their example and resigned from the system to "live like anarchists" in communes and other "lifestyle" enclaves. Unfortunately, the same confusion and chaos which characterizes the neo-anarchists in the outside

significance of these achievements must always be taken into account.

The break in the continuity of the anarchist movement cut-off the young anarchists from the rich experience of past struggles. They were from the very outset doomed to recapitulate all the mistakes, and uncritically accept as new, all the utopistic ideas which the anarchist movement has long since outgrown and rejected as totally irrelevant to the problems of our increasingly complex society.

In two essential respects—the revolt against authority and the paucity of constructive ideas—the character of the "new anarchism" is remarkably similar to the experience of past movements. The 1848 revolution, wrote Bakunin:

> *…was rich in instincts and negative theoretical ideas which gave it full justification for its fight against privilege, but it lacked completely any positive and practical ideas which would be needed to enable it to erect a new system upon the ruins of the old bourgeois setup…*
> (*Federalism—Socialism—Anti-Theologism*)

From the disappointing, but no less valuable experience of the past ten years, many young anarchists have arrived at similar conclusions. They have come to realize the necessity for positive thinking and action. It is no longer enough to be against everything. Increasing signs point to the emergence of a constructive tendency in American anarchism, whose general orientation we have outlined in preceding paragraphs. The new anarchism is slowly maturing, but it is only beginning to emerge from its chaotic and erratic phase. It is far too early to make assessments or guage its full impact.

they alone, can make the hippie revolution…It seems to me (although I may be hopelessly old-fashioned) that true anarchism has to be a movement of the poor and of the working-classes—not OF, but FOR. The new generations of anarchists have been coming together to study and to put into practice the real principles of working-class anarchism…Valuable experiences which could have helped us to build this new movement are lost to us because two generations separate the young from the old anarchists.

Many of us younger anarchists were attracted to the IWW because it is the kind of an organization that combines a libertarian approach to the working-class movement with a constructive economic and organizational alternative to the capitalist nation-state. There is a need for a strong libertarian movement and a consciously anarchist thrust of organizers and militants who by example and intelligent educational work will render the workers receptive to

libertarian ideas…the present anarchist movement is attempting to convey the ideas of voluntary cooperation and mutual aid and to translate the inspiration and example of our tradition to these new times…

Concluding Remarks

To their everlasting credit, the magnificent struggles of the young rebels against war, racism, and the false values of that vast crime, The Establishment, sparked the revival of the long dormant anarchist and other leftist movements. In rightfully pointing out the mistakes of the new anarchists, the lasting

world, is unfortunately duplicated within the communes themselves. The communes do not constitute a real movement. They are, in effect, petty entrepreneurs absolutely incapable of creating a true "counter-culture."

Among many anarchists, the collapse of the New Left provoked intense discussion and precipitated a reorientation of libertarian ideas, with special emphasis on more positive, constructive policies still to be worked out. One of the attempts in this direction is being made by the anarcho-communist ecology groups centered around the ideas of the activist writer and speaker, Murray Bookchin, who enjoys a large following among students and New Left circles.

Bookchin's ideas are a bridge between, or rather, a combination of utopian New Left ideas and traditional anarchism. In addition to the magazine *Anarchos*, his most important works are assembled in the volume, *Post-Scarcity Anarchism*. Bookchin repudiates anti-social individualism and places himself squarely in the anarchist-communist camp. The economic problem under anarchist-communism would be greatly simplified and rendered altogether irrelevant by "…post-scarcity technology which will assure material abundance for ALL [Bookchin's emphasis]…it means the…disappearance of toil…[abundance will remove] the most fundamental premises of counter-revolution, the rationale of domination…[with abundance for all] no sector of society need fear the communist revolution…"

Bookchin's idea that the free society is impossible without abundance, which in turn depends on advanced technology and economic development, rests upon the Marxist theory of economic determinism. But the deterioration of the radical and labor movements refutes this theory. Abundance, far from promoting social revolution, leads instead to the bourgeoisification of the proletariat, converting them into the staunchest defenders of the status quo. Moreover, according to this theory, economically underdeveloped countries would be automatically

excluded from making a successful social revolution. Given depletion of natural resources, the population explosion, and the chronic poverty of 2/3 of the human race: it has been suggested that abundance, even under socialism, is not likely in the foreseeable future.

The economic proposals closely resemble Kropotkin's ideas as explained in his *Fields, Factories and Workshops*. Bookchin assembled impressive modern evidence to demonstrate the feasibility of decentralizing industry to achieve greater balance between rural and urban living and scaling down industry to manageable proportions. From the ecological point of view, the pollution threatening the very existence of life on this planet would be largely eliminated by modern technology.

Anarchos, like all new groupings, is inclined to overstress utopistic ideas like: repudiation of the organized labor movement and the proletariat as the revolutionary class, together with the whole concept of class; "…the tragedy of the socialist movement is that it opposes class-consciousness to self-consciousness…"; glorification of the bogus "counter-culture'; etc. But while still elaborating these familiar utopistic formulas, the *Anarchos* group, like other groups, is

gradually beginning to search for more practical approaches to immediate social problems. Under such circumstances a certain amount of confusion is, of course, unavoidable.

Thus, where *Anarchos* formerly derided all such attempts, it now prints "…a comradely response to the *Anarchos* group's article suggesting that anarcho-communists participate in local electoral politics…" Where *Anarchos* formerly maintained that decisions be arrived at by consensus, it now suggests the idea that decisions be made by majority vote. Where the form of organization of social organization was, in effect, limited to local general assemblies, *Anarchos* now calls for far more complex forms of organization, rarely, if ever, mentioned before: not only federations, but federations of federations—

CONFEDERATIONS. *Anarchos* favors "…confederations of municipalities…confederations of city councils…workers' councils, food co-operatives, communes, independent and non-hierarchical trade union locals…" community organizations, etc. (all quotes *Anarchos*, No. 4, 1972)

While these revisions are far too simplistic to meet the problems of modern complex societies (the confederations must not go "beyond the municipal level…") and are objectionable on other grounds, the very fact that such forms of organization are even being considered indicates that they were made in response to the expressed needs of many young anarchists for more realistic and constructive alternative to authoritarianism. Aa long as the young anarchists lived in the close atmosphere of the academic world, sheltered from direct contact with the tribulations of the workers, they approached anarchism from the purely academic plane. But they felt this need for practical libertarian alternatives most keenly when they left school to join the labor force to face altogether different and harsher problems.

In search for such alternatives many young libertarians joined the IWW. Most, if not all, of the new members belong at one and the same time to both the IWW and to anarchist groups. This reorientation far from being confined to the IWW, is but one manifestation of the changing moods and ideas of serious-minded young anarchists. The better to appreciate the attitude of these militants we cite typical responses to requests for information:

> *Unfortunately, the irresponsible exhibitionist 'let's do it in the street' variety of anarchists themselves personify and perpetuate the false image of anarchists as ultra-individualists who are against all organization and who are incapable of doing anything constructive. These people trapped in the myth of the 'counter-culture' believe that youth,*