The Anarchist Struggle

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Zabalaza Books

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★CHAPTER 1

THE Anarchist Struggle

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF a free society involves a social revolution that will remove the institutions of class, property and government. On the method of this struggle the anarchists differ from the political revolutionaries and pseudo-revolutionaries. They accept neither the Social Democratic idea of the gradual evolution of a socialist society through the use of parliament and other institutions of capitalist democracy, nor the Leninist idea of the seizure of State power by a party representing one class which will, in theory, usher in the classless society by governmental means.

Parliament is an institution moulded by the bourgeoisie for the purpose of achieving their own revolution and maintaining their own control over society. A few hundred men are chosen by suffrage to represent, in the case of England, some forty-five million people. These men are almost invariably professional politicians, who regard parliament as their career and, although theoretically they represent the people of the country, in fact the conditions of parliamentary elections are such that they must be supported by some vested interest, at worst a group of capitalists, at best a reformist trade union, before they can fight the election campaign. In parliament, if they are to make anything of a career for themselves, they must be attached to some party, of the Left, or Right, and vote, not according to their own judgment, but according to the political line of this party and the dictates of its leaders. In this way they legislate on the affairs of the people in matters on which few of them have any real knowledge whatever. A politician may have knowledge of the affairs of the interest that he represents, but the very nature of his career prevents him from gaining knowledge of more than a fraction of the affairs of the country. He is therefore obliged, for very ignorance, to follow the lead of his party, and in this way a chamber consisting of lawyers, journalists, trade union officials and other parasites, chosen mostly for a gift of the gab, dictates the conditions under which the producers shall carry out their work and live their lives.

A party claiming to represent socialist ideas may achieve a majority and be allowed to form a government. Once in power, it has to maintain itself there, and for this purpose has to use the coercive machinery that any other government would use to retain its hold on the nation. The necessity of keeping its position governs its actions, and it is, like any other government, at the mercy of the people who control the economic life of society. It cannot risk losing the co-operation of those who control finance and industry, i.e., the capitalist class, and consequently its policy is so shaped as not to offend these interests. The longer it remains in office, the more its members become corrupted and moulded by the power they wield, the more they

are concerned with power itself rather than with the use they might make of it. Instead of using capitalist institutions for precipitating socialism, they find that these very institutions are formed in such a way that whoever uses them, unless he seizes the economic power controls of society, will in turn be used by the capitalists for their own ends. Parliament was formed as a means of maintaining the interests of a particular ruling class, i.e. the capitalists, and while economic power is in the hands of the capitalists, the parliamentarian finds that, unless he does as they wish, their entire resources of economic, financial and propaganda power will be turned to his destruction and he must either obey or quit. Thus, while capitalism still exists, the reformist party cannot progress towards socialism. It may achieve minor amelioration's within capitalism, but these will only be countenanced if the capitalists can afford to allow them, and will be withdrawn as soon as the ruling class can find an opportunity. Parliamentary action, far from precipitating the social revolution, tends to perpetuate the existing order.

It thus results, through the working class party becoming a part of the capitalist governmental machine; in a class collaboration in which the exploiting class - the capitalist ruling class with its economic control - must always gain at the expense of the exploited working class.

Class collaboration, the entry of working class elements into the governing structure of capitalist society, is thus the negation of the social revolution. The social revolution can only be achieved by the class struggle, the struggle of the exploited to wrest power from the hands of the exploiters and so abolish the class system.

This much is recognised in theory by the Leninists. They hold that this struggle can only be maintained and won by a disciplined party who will seize power in the name of the working class and expropriate the capitalists from both political and economic control of society. But they also maintain that this can be done only by the party seizing the governmental machine and instituting a dictatorship of the insurrectionary class, to be administered by the party. Thus a new system of government is established, with the party in control of the political, economic and military power bases. The governmental methods of the old society are perpetuated in the State, the army and the police force, under the control of the party, which in this way becomes itself a *de facto* ruling class. Like every other government, the revolutionary administration is concerned first and foremost with the problem of retaining the power it has seized. The affairs of society therefore come more and more under the control of this ruling group, and its members become increasingly concerned with power. Power brings privilege, and the ruling class rapidly becomes the privileged class. So a new incentive is added, and a change appears in the nature of the dictatorship, in that power is retained not to maintain the revolution but to further the interests of the ruling class. The gulf appears between the party and the workers, who become once again an exploited class, and, instead of the class system having been abolished, a new ruling class has merely replaced the capitalist class. The example of the Russian Revolution will reveal how this happens in practice. The class struggle by political revolution in fact results in a negation of the classless society.

to be more pleasant than those of the dweller in an industrial slum. He can make contact with more people interested in his subject and receive more encouragement from his circle of acquaintances than can the industrial worker who turns to writing or painting. Even if in later years he may go through hard times, he has almost certainly enjoyed more security and comfort during his formative years, and has at least received an education that gives him some contact with the cultural tradition.

In an Anarchist society the environment into which the artist is born will bring to all men the advantages only the middle classes know today, together with a freedom and a balance of life which no men enjoy in this tyrannical period of history. The number of artists produced will be proportionately higher, and as weakly governed Athens was culturally far greater than regimented and stultified Sparta, so will the free society of the future be even more rich than the present universal Sparta into which our world has declined.

To prophesy the development of art in a free society would be as pointless as to prophesy the institutional development of that society. Both will grow from the evolving and changing social patterns of men living free and abundant lives. To relate the art of the future to any of the schools or classes that exist today would be foolish. Even today the distinctions are largely meaningless, the arbitrary inventions of literary parasites, and in a society based on other ideas such artificial conventions will inevitably vanish. On the other hand, the real tradition of art will as certainly persist, for art, like all forms of life and the activities of life, is a continuous though changing organic whole. The art of the free society will have its roots in the cultures of the past, and its flowers will draw their sap through channels that stretch from Dantesque Florence and Sophoclean Athens, from Dryden's England and Li Po's China, to a future whose achievements will be as noble and more abundant than theirs. The living body of art will survive and grow, but the superficial excrescences of fashion and convention will be purged away as men grow towards balance and completeness.

the government supervises every phase of life and the efforts of the individual are continually subjected to a restraint which inevitably frustrates all cultural vigour. The progress of this intensification of automatic and inorganic organisation in society can be seen reflected in the triviality of our art and the barrenness of our science in all but its destructive aspects.

Culture affects, but is also affected by the society in which it exists. In the sense of expression it is an individual phenomenon, but no expression is satisfactory unless it also makes communication, and in its function of communication art is essentially a social phenomenon, and as such subject to the influence of social patterns and environments. A rigid social pattern, a repressive social environment can deprive expression of its main contact with life by restricting the ease of communication. Whether or not an authoritarian regime deliberately attempts to impose its own pattern on the current art forms, the cultural expression of the artist will inevitably be affected by the surrounding restrictions on life expression. Art may be a sublimation of the ordinary actions of an unfettered life; it is never a substitute for life, and indeed, can exist only in relation to life itself. Where, therefore, life is unduly restricted, art will share its barrenness.

Just as life can only become complete in its expression in a society liberated from the economic and political anxieties that menace the modern man, so can art reach its most complete forms only in such a free society.

Anarchist society offers the requisites for a rich cultural development. Communal consciousness, economic security, a free and adequate education, liberty of expression untrammelled by restrictive law or custom, a pleasant and healthy environment, and a balanced relation between physical and mental occupations, all these will result from the anarchist society, and all are beneficial to the cultural development of society and the individual.

It may be objected that these factors are unnecessary to the true artistic genius, who will produce his great work under whatever circumstances he has to endure. This is so much moonshine. Periods of social regimentation produce little in the way of significant culture, as do countries where men have to fight continually against adverse natural or economic conditions. Classes with more money, leisure and privileges produce more artistic work than depressed classes in the same time and place. The majority of the great artistic and scientific achievements of the post-mediaeval Americo-European society have been effected by members of the upper and middle classes. So-called proletarian art is generally trash too pitiable to be worth criticism, and the workers who produce work of real artistic importance are so few as to make them something in the nature of prodigies. These facts do not mean that more people are born with artistic talents among the middle classes than among the workers. They mean merely that if a man with an artistic talent is born into the middle classes the circumstances of his formative life are such as to make it much more easy for him to develop his possibilities. He has usually a better education - not necessarily in the academic sense. He has more privacy throughout his life. He starts work some yeas later, and then usually works shorter hours and at less exacting work. Even if he only lives in an ugly suburb, his home and surroundings are likely

Thus, the social revolution to the free, classless society can be attained neither by the Social-Democratic method of reformist parliamentary action, nor by the Leninist method of a pseudo-revolutionary seizure of state power. The first tends to perpetuate the present class society, with the incorporation of labour leaders into the existing ruling class. The second, by its continuance of the institution of government, sets up a new class society in which the party that carried out the coup d'etat becomes the ruling class.

There remains, then, only one way to a free society. That is by a struggle that will aim not at a political revolution, but at an entire revolution in social and economic relationships in which the state, class and property will be abolished at one and the same time. Thus the anarchist conception of the class struggle differs from the Leninist conception in that it does not envisage or in practice involve the stewardship of any class during a period of transition, but stands for the immediate ending of the social and economic system which involves the division of society into exploiters and exploited and in its place advocates a society where there will be no kind of exploitation and where, therefore, class divisions will be abolished. The only true class struggle is the struggle, not for the replacement of one class of rulers by another, but for the elimination of class itself.

The only section of the community which can carry out such a struggle is the class of the exploited, the class of the workers.. This is not from any intrinsic merit in the worker as such. Individually, he may be no better than an individual bourgeois, and he may very well be just as much corrupted by the prevailing system of social relationships. But his is the only class that, as a class, has an immediate interest in the social revolution.

This does not mean that individuals from the middle and the upper classes are not sincerely devoted to the revolution. Many of the revolutionary leaders of the past have come from these strata of society, and one has only to remember men like Bakunin, Kropotkin, Tolstoy, Cafiero, Berneri, to realise that there will always be men who are motivated by their sense of justice to act in the cause of freedom against their own material interests. Nevertheless, it is the working class who are most immediately concerned with the social revolution, and it is they who in the last resort hold control of the power bases of society whose command is necessary before the revolution can succeed. Intellectuals and trained revolutionaries may prepare for the revolution, but at the zero hour only the mass direct action of the people can unseat the ruling class and prevent the rise of a new ruling class which will attempt to re-establish tyranny and exploitation in its own interests.

By the direct action of the workers is meant the action of the workers in the industrial field to attack a class society in its most vulnerable point, *i.e.* in its economic heel. A political revolution involves the seizure of state power by a minority and the re-establishment of government. A true social revolution involves the seizure of economic power by the exploited class, who will thus prevent the maintenance or re-erection of the institutions of government.

Every society rests, ultimately, on an economic basis, and the power of every ruling class depends on its control of the means of production. Feudal society was

based on the control of the land by the feudal nobility. Capitalist society is based on the control of industry by capitalist proprietors. Leninist society is based on the control of both industry and land by the party bureaucracy. In every case power rests on this economic control. If it were taken away neither military power nor political power could take its place nor could either of them prevail for long, for both are ultimately dependent on access to the products of agriculture and industry.

In every form of society economic power is, in practice, in the hands of the ruling class. But the ultimate economic control rests with the men who carry out the actual physical operations of industry. If every operative ceased to work his machine, if every farm hand ceased to guide his plough, if every locomotive driver let his engine stand idle on the lines, mere titular possession of the means of production would avail the ruling class little. Their power rests on the toil of the worker, and without that toil their world will fall into paralysis. Their political systems cannot work; their military machines cannot function unless they are fed by the services of workers in industry, in transport and in agriculture. They are ultimately dependent on the co-operation of the producers on the economic field, and it is this dependence that gives the workers their power to carry out the social revolution.

Anarchism, and particularly anarcho-syndicalism, therefore rests its conception of the social revolution on the economic action of the workers. Of this economic action the principal weapon is the strike, the withdrawal of co-operation in industry. This weapon is also used by the reformist trade unions for the attainment of improvements in working conditions and wages under capitalist conditions. It can, however, be successful in this respect only under an expanding capitalism, when it is in the interest of the capitalists to grant concessions rather than face a stoppage of production. In a declining capitalism, or in capitalism under conditions of slump, the capitalists are unable to grant any major concessions and are thus forced to fight the strikes, which in these circumstances rarely end in favour of the workers. Nevertheless, while realising the failure of strike action to gain any permanent improvements under the present system, the anarchists support the day-to-day struggle because it is a means of educating the workers in the nature of the forces they oppose, and of training them for the major struggle that lies ahead.

Moreover, the anarcho-syndicalist strike differs from the ordinary trade union strike in one important and fundamental point, i.e. it is more than a mere withdrawal of labour. In the ordinary withdrawal of labour strike the workers are at an immediate disadvantage because they have voluntarily detached themselves from the means of production. They have condemned themselves to a slow period of starvation, in which the boss will always beat them, unless market conditions make it more profitable for him to give in than to wait. In a general strike which consisted of nothing more than a general withdrawal of labour, the ruling class would go short, but so would the people and it is almost certain that the people would starve first.

The anarchists therefore advocate an active form of general strike as being the only efficient revolutionary strike. This involves the seizure and expropriation of the instruments of production by the workers, who would occupy the factories and railways and continue to work them, but would refuse to co-operate with the ruling class.

comic drama was at its height, the novel and literary criticism appeared in recognisable forms. Dryden laid the foundations of a clear and simple English prose, Wren and Purcell marked the height of the post-medieval English architecture and music, and science began to advance rapidly, both in theoretical and practical fields, on the empirical lines laid down by the previously unheeded Francis Bacon.

Another was the age of the Romantic revival, when English writing broke away from the mannered sterility of the Hanoverian flays into the exuberance of an age characterised by the social changes and political scares associated with the French Revolution; Napoleon, the rise of industry and the Chartist movement. A fourth was that period generally known as the 'Nineties, when a comparatively minor revitalisation of English literature took place, which, as its dominant figures were the Irishmen Wilde, Shaw, Yeats, and Moore, we must correlate not so much with the political state of England as with that of Ireland, where at that time the forces were gathering towards the end of English domination.

It is further significant that since the last years of the nineteenth century those countries that have contributed (considered proportionately) most to European development, particularly in the sense of social development, have been not the great imperialist or military states, like Germany, Russia, England, Italy, France, but the small countries of the western edge of Europe, the Scandinavian countries, Ireland, Holland and Belgium. It is in these countries, for instance, that intensive agricultural methods have been most highly developed. In Denmark and Ireland the experiment of producers' co-operatives has been nurtured, while in Holland there have been great advances in town planning and architecture.

From these examples it is reasonable to contend that, so far as human culture has manifested itself up to the present, it has done so most abundantly in those societies where central authority has been least powerful, least pervasive and least organised. In all of these societies authority has existed in some degree, but either the decay of state institutions or the lack of military power of the state concerned has made it comparatively ineffective so that even if its manifestations, under such circumstances have occasionally been tyrannical, its attacks on the individual tended to be spasmodic. In such circumstances the human mind and genius, finding itself at least in some degree free from the restraints of life and manners which characterised periods and places of greater control, has been able to express itself far more fully and adequately in artistic, scientific and social achievements, whether corporate or individual.

The years since the last war, and in a less degree the years before it, have been characterised in the major countries by a barrenness of really important cultural achievement, which can be seen in the way a few individual works of art stand in isolation from a great mass of mediocrity. If we view with anything approaching sober judgment the cultural record of the major European countries, we cannot fail to be impressed by the poverty of their twentieth century achievements, as compared even with the despised nineteenth century. This cultural weakness of the twentieth century springs from the change in the social structure, and that change consists in the growing consolidation of the authoritarian form of society into the total state, in which

tity in the Chinese race. Yet this nation, which lacked the common characteristics of nationality as understood by Westerners, produced a mass of art certainly greater than that of any other race, and a body of philosophy and ethical thought as important as that which emanated from Athens.

In contrast with the cultural fertility of politically unstable Greece and China, one can consider the barrenness in achievements of human value of the centralised and highly organised states of ancient Rome and modern Japan.

The only period when there existed a really continent-wide movement of European social and cultural development was that covering the late Middle Ages, and the early Renaissance, when the power of the feudal kings was slight and the almost independent walled cities of Germany and Italy, even of France and England, produced a great development of social institutions, of philosophy, of scientific enquiry, and an artistic revival which gave the greatest architectural style the world has yet seen, in the noble buildings built often by voluntary labour, like the great cathedral of Chartres.

If we consider the nations that arose in Europe after the break-up of the medieval order, we find that their periods of cultural vigour were those when there was no central state government, or when that government was weak and the organisation of life tended to revert to its organic, functional and regional forms.

The Italy of Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci and Galileo and the Germany of Beethoven, Goethe and Bach were both split among tiny regional principalities and republics, usually militarily weak, but frequently enjoying more real prosperity and almost always a more intense cultural life than their larger and more highly militarised neighbours. The great age of French culture, when Paris became the artistic capital of the world and produced its best painting and literature, was that nineteenth-century which was marked by three revolutions. The climax of Russian cultural achievement, when the great works of Tolstoy, Turgenev and Dostoievsky were being written, when Russian music reached its height and the ballet was developed as it has been developed in no other country, moved at the time when Tsarism was rotting towards the social upheaval that brought its end.

Similarly, the culture we regard as purely English began to emerge in the turmoil of the closing phase of feudalism, and the four other periods at which it displayed outstanding vitality each coincided with a state of political disintegration. One was the late Elizabethan and early Jacobean period when English tragic drama reached its height in Shakespeare and Webster and English lyric poetry in Donne, while the system of absolute monarchy instituted and maintained by the Tudors was breaking under the impact of the rising bourgeoisie.

Another was the Restoration period when, owing partly to the personal laziness of Charles II and partly to the neat balance of powers and intentions arising out of the hostility between the antipathy of the squirearchy and burgesses for the idea of a despotism and the antipathy of the king for the idea of an oligarchy, the central government became weak, the army and navy declined into preserves for place seekers and the actual administration of the country devolved more and more on regional centres, the local magistrates and the aldermen of the towns. At this age the

Food would be made and carried to the workers, but every form of product and service would be denied to the government and its forces. Thus, while in an ordinary strike the worker has to rely merely on his withdrawal of labour and is segregated from the means of production, becoming susceptible in this way to economic distress, in the syndicalist strike he withdraws co-operation from the governing class, but still contributes his labour to the running of the factories and transport services he holds, by means of which the possibility of economic distress is withdrawn from the workers, and the main obstacle to the success of industrial action is removed.

There are other varieties of economic action that the workers can use in their struggle against the employing class and the state. One of these is ca'canny, working slow, by which the tempo of production is decreased by the workers concentrating on turning out elaborately finished articles, or working according to rule. The latter form was used to a great extent by railway employees in this country, when single depots were involved in minor disputes for which the union executives would not authorise a strike. The men would work so as to carry out in every letter the elaborate rules laid down by the railway company, and in a very short time the result would be such confusion and delay in dealing with traffic that the employers very often gave in to the workers' demands.

Another form of economic action is the boycott, used so widely by the Irish against their English exploiters, before they took masters of their own race. The boycott, in general, runs in the field of consumption rather than in that of production. For instance, workers can undermine the economic stability of certain industrialists by refusing to buy their goods. The boycott can also be applied in the form of a refusal to co-operate with the government in various schemes of state organisation.

A third form of action, which has been used extensively by workers on the continent and is now being used by the people of India in their struggle for freedom, is sabotage. Sabotage originally meant working clumsily; the word was derived from sabot, the French wooden shoe, which gives the idea of clumsiness. But it has come to embrace any direct interference with the actual material instruments of production or transport in order to embarrass the state or the exploiter. Thus it can mean mere bad workmanship, or it can mean equally well the interruption of transport by taking up the railway lines. Sabotage in various forms has been used in almost all the recorded struggles of the people against their oppressors. It was used extensively by British textile workers during the Luddite risings, and also by Russian peasants who destroyed their crops rather than have them taken away forcibly by the Bolsheviks. Sabotage, organised carefully, can be an extremely effective weapon in any social struggle. This is demonstrated by the fact that in time of war, governments are always anxious to promote sabotage in enemy countries while they attempt to suppress it in their own lands with the utmost savagery.

But of all the forms of economic action, the strike remains the most important, without which none of the other forms of action can be fully effective. The true social revolution, as against the political revolution, must be based on the strike; which is the method that gives the only assurance of the workers themselves gaining and keeping power wrested from their oppressors.

Anarchists regard the general strike as the supreme revolutionary tactic that can shake and finally destroy the structure of authoritarian society and usher in the classless society. They do not, however, as their opponents have declared, hold the optimistic belief that the state will necessarily fail at the challenge of a single general strike. The revolutionary struggle may well involve a series of such strikes and a relatively long period of action on the part of the workers before the exploiting class are finally driven from their positions of power and government is eliminated.

Anarchists, as I have already indicated, do not believe that the revolution can be engineered by a party organisation or a conspiratorial society. It can only come from a revolutionary urge developing among the people themselves. The duty of the revolutionary is to assist the growth of this urge, and to present the true revolutionary objective to the people in order that the revolution may flow towards a libertarian society. The revolutionary should never aspire to leadership as political revolutionaries have done in the past. Such leadership brings power to the leading group and not to the people, and power thrust into the hands of leaders results inevitably in the erection of a new governmental state.

Anarchists, therefore, do not attempt to form political parties or establish cults of leadership. Their vocation is to present the truth to the people in order that the people themselves may take their destiny into their own hands and carry through the social revolution.

They recognise however, that some form of organisation is necessary for prosecuting the economic struggle. But they realise equally well that this cannot be in the form of a party, organised and governed from above and consisting only of a minority of the workers. Instead, they envisage an organisation on an economic basis that will embrace all the workers, according to their industries and their place of work; by which means their struggle on the economic plane can best be maintained. This form of organisation is embodied in the syndicate, whose nature I have already described in the chapter entitled "Anarcho-Syndicalism" (i.e. in the book Socialism from Below: A History of Anarchism available from ZB -ed.). The syndicate, organised and governed by the workers themselves, protected by its lack of a permanent bureaucracy from the tendency towards centralism and authoritarianism which destroy both trade unions and political parties as revolutionary instruments, and connected organically with the functional life of the workers, is the best, and indeed the only effectual instrument that has so far been evolved for the prosecution of the struggle, towards the free society of anarchy. Moreover, the syndicates are significant not only for their revolutionary role, but also for the fact that they contain the germ of the functional organisation upon which the new society can be built after the revolution. It is only by understanding this dual role of the syndicates, as the destroyers of the old order and the builders of the new society, that we can work out the strategy of the Anarchist struggle.

cal unit has existed which did not base itself ultimately on the ability to force the individuals within it to obey the will of the controlling elements. Social units, on the other hand, which were operated by co-operative and voluntary means, have succeeded in surviving over long periods without internal strife. Their failure has resulted either from the attack of overpoweringly strong external forces or from the co-operative units themselves adopting the authoritarian pattern of external political bodies, which course has invariably ended in their decline as valuable social entities. (The decline of the English trade unions to subordinate control institutions of the state is a notable example of the decay of an originally co-operative institution that adopted a centralised authoritarian pattern).

An examination of history, the real history of concrete human achievements and institutions as against the semi-mythical history of political institutions, shows that the development of the corporate and individual achievements of men is strongest and assumes its most significant forms in periods and places where political organisation is weakened and least centralised. The vitality of human culture appears to run in inverse proportion to the strength of the state. Periods of political stabilisation, when authority is held firmly by an efficient centralised government, when the state is deified and the free action of the individual is impeded, are most often periods of sterility, both in the development of organic institutions and the cultural achievements of individual artists and scientists. Times of political disintegration, when social forms are in flux, when the power and efficiency of the government are weak, when the state is regarded lightly and the individual finds room and freedom for development, are periods of institutional and cultural growth.

This can be observed by studying the history of every cultural region that has contributed widely to the real social progress of mankind. Among European regions, Greece was without doubt the most important, and at the climax of its artistic and intellectual achievement Greece did not exist as a united and centralised state. It was a collection of city territories, all unstably governed (with the exception of Sparta - culturally the most barren) and all sufficiently small for the individual citizen at least to have the opportunity of taking part in the conduct of affairs. In this society the turbulent city of Athens became the centre of the most fertile culture the world has yet possessed, and we have only to consider the names of Plato and Socrates, Sophocles, Euripides and Aeschylus, Phidias and Aristophanes, to realise the vitality of the human spirit in that city whose political life was so unsure. Nor was Athens alone, for many of the other cities and islands produced important groups of philosophers, poets and artists, and centuries after the high days of Attic culture there arose in the decaying kingdom of Egypt the great cultural centre of Alexandria, a Greek colony that was to emulate Athens in its contributions to philosophy and science.

In China, the power of the central government was never ubiquitous, and, in the great periods of Chinese civilisation, what government did exist was localised in a class of scholars, while by far the greater proportion of administration was carried on in voluntary manner by autonomous village and guild units. The ancient Chinese were never a military nation and often saved their civilisation by accepting the invaders into their midst and so influencing them that they eventually lost their iden-

ing on the social structure.

There is, for instance, the law of libel, which, while in theory it protects the individual against defamatory or damaging statements, is in fact of great value to the political figures and the ruling class in general in presenting a false face to the people and concealing the true nature of their activities.

The laws against blasphemy, which remain on the statute book, even if they are rarely applied, are retained to preserve the state church which provides a useful myth to gull many of the people into supporting the established regime, and sanctifies with pious phrases all the brutalities involved in internal suppression and external aggression.

The laws against bigamy, abortion, homosexual practices, transvestism, and other sexual deviations, as well as the semi-official persecution of the unmarried mother and the bastard child, protect the institution of the family, which is needed to produce children to become the victims of the next World War.

Thus the state, in its own interests, thrusts the ant-eater proboscis of its legal system into every corner of the national and individual life, in order to discover and curtail any activities that may endanger its own existence.

Political freedom is thus, in fact, an ingenious delusion, by which the governing classes give the people the comforting belief that they themselves have made the chains that bind them and that for this reason the chains are necessary and good. It gives men certain liberties that the ruling classes find it wise to concede as a cheap way of buying security, but its very retention of a political system, which means government, which means coercion, must in the end destroy political freedom itself.

Anarchists do not advocate political freedom. What they advocate is freedom from politics, freedom from the institution of government, freedom from coercion, freedom from the law's interference in the lives of individual men and women, freedom from economic domination and inequality. The last is perhaps the most important, in that economic freedom, the satisfaction of mans' physical needs for food, clothing, shelter, and all the other material necessities of a civilized life, is necessary before any man can begin to be free.

By the elimination of property, vested either in individuals or in corporate ruling classes, by the destruction of the state, by the substitution, for a society based on the mechanical and artificial institutions imposed by the dictates of propertied and governing interests, of a society based on institutions rising organically from the needs of men, anarchism will sweep away immediately the need for the suppression of individual freedom. Only a society based on control from above has need of coercion. A society based on co-operation can do without oppression and restriction because it is based on the voluntary agreement between its members. Indeed, it must do without coercion, if it is to retain its co-operative basis, and avoid relapsing into a political institution controlled by a governing cabal.

Freedom is as much a necessity for society as it is for the individual men and women who comprise it. Restrictions on liberty naturally produce oppositions within a society. No political unit in the history of so-called civilisation has existed without carrying within itself the disruptive forces of discontent - precisely because no politi-

★CHAPTER 2

THE Shape of an Anarchist Society

IT IS A COMMON objection to anarchism that, while the anarchist makes an effective, and, indeed, convincing criticism of existing society and of the other means of realising the necessary social revolution, he makes little in the way of concrete proposals for the future of society after the revolution.

This statement is justified only to the extent that the anarchist does not lay down any firm and detailed plans for a society, which, being divorced from the social conceptions of contemporary society, may well evolve in a manner different from any we conceive at the present day. Society grows with the maturing of the ideas of the men within it, grows according to natural rather than artificial laws, and its form cannot be dictated by the plans or schemes of individuals. It is not for us, who are still bound, to plan the lives of those who will be free, for when the people have liberated themselves from authority and exploitation, they will arrange their individual and social lives not according to the ideas of social theorists, but according to their own ever-evolving needs as human and social beings.

When property and class relationships have been broken down and replaced by the equal relationships of free men, when authority has vanished and society is conducted on the basis of voluntary co-operation, there will certainly be a great change in social values and, indeed, in the attitude of men to life itself. Many of the prevalent conceptions of contemporary society will vanish. The belief in material progress for its own sake will be replaced by the belief in a social evolution towards a balanced life. Ambition as we know it, social and financial ambition, will find no place in a classless society. Men will be satisfied with a sufficiency of material comforts and with work that fulfils their creative needs. Where there is enough for all, luxury, which is only the complement of poverty, will lose its attraction, and, where men are not frustrated by unsympathetic and fruitless occupations, they will not desire to perpetuate or to enjoy vicariously the extravagances which provide the sensational variety in an imperfect society. Time will no longer be the driving fury it represents in a competitive society, for with the proper development of productive and scientific resources man will be able to acquire both sufficient leisure and the congenial work which will enable him to practise the art of living in a manner that so far has been possible, for the most part, to the wealthy and leisured alone, and to them, even, only in a limited degree.

These are generalisations merely, but they do represent the only kind of thing

one can say with confidence about the manner of human life after the classless society has been attained. Anything in the way of a more detailed picture is likely to be little more than a representation of the personal predilections of the author, like Morris's *News From Nowhere*.

But although the anarchist would be unwise, and, indeed; insincere to paint a portrait of society as it will develop after the classless society has been erected and human life has been purged of all the competitive elements that beset contemporary society, he can and does develop a plan of how society can be organised, immediately after the social revolution, on a voluntary and co-operative basis that will ensure the development of social freedom.

Anarchism, as has been said already, is based on the concepts of freedom and justice, justice being that reciprocity of freedom without which no real individual freedom is possible. The social principles that follow from these concepts are mutual aid, or co-operation, and communism, or common ownership of the means of production (not to be confused with Leninist and Marxist Communism which implies State ownership of the means of production).

In the anarchist view these principles are expressed concretely in the administration of economic and functional affairs by voluntary associations of the workers for the purpose of running the factories and the farms and providing the necessary social services such as posts, drainage, roads, etc. Each industry would be administered by its own workers who are the most competent people for that purpose.

The medical services, for instance, would be provided by the doctors, nurses and pharmacists, who, having expert knowledge of their professions, are obviously better fitted to do this than politicians chosen according to the methods of parliamentary democracy.

Similarly, theatres would be operated by the actors and theatrical workers themselves, and in this way, in a society where the profit motive had ended; those best fitted would provide dramatic entertainment to the people and form their natural mentors in this art. Quality would replace the traditional box office appeal, and, where there existed no longer the false standard of vulgarity induced by the debasement of taste through the stultification of a state education, the peoples' appreciation could be raised until they had once again an attitude to good drama comparable with that of the populace of Sophoclean Athens or Shakespearean England.

Again, in the production of the physical necessities of life the most competent people to run industry are the people who actually know it from vocational experience.

It may be argued that the workers in modern industry often take little interest in their work and are concerned mostly with expending as little energy in as short a time for as much money as possible. This is probably true in many cases, but it arises from no other cause than the conditions that surround the modern industrial worker.

Commodities in modern society are produced primarily for profit, only secondarily for use. Production is used for the benefit of the ruling class, the owning or, in Fascist states, the directing class, and the worker is given a share of the proceeds of production which approximates as nearly as possible to the amount which will

didates are either rich men or representatives of some vested interest in the existing order, whether it is a railway company or a trade union.

Democratic freedoms, then, are relative to wealth. But this is not the full measure of the relationship. In reality the rich enjoy a far greater freedom than that conferred by their ability to exploit the existing law to its full extent. Their money allows them to reach planes of enjoyment that are denied the poor, because poverty as well as the law acts as a bar on freedom. Legally the poor man is free to possess a Renoir or a Steinway piano or a dozen Sung vases. Manifestly, his freedom in this respect amounts to nothing. A poor man is free to play golf or drive his car out in the country on a Sunday. But this freedom amounts to little when his last sixpence goes to buy shoe leather for the children and his weekend is spent botching their shoes. A poor man is free to eat lobsters every day, except in the close season when nobody wants to eat them. He has also the liberty of champagne and caviar, vodka and venison, and a whole list of delectable foods that will never grace his meagre table and hobnob with the meat paste and the margarine. Nor does the law forbid him to sleep between silken sheets with the dearest tart in London, but reality lays down the veto the law declines. In a class society the ruling class are always free owing to their control of the means of production, of the money that in an acquisitive society is the way to all enjoyment. The ruled are not free because lack of control of production, and the benefits of money, liberal education, etc., proceeding there from, cuts them off from all but the most meagre forms of enjoyment.

Moreover, political freedom in a class society (and all political societies are by definition class societies), is relative to the security of that society. The ruling class give just so much political freedom as it is worthwhile and possible to give to keep the people out of mischief. Obviously, if people can be kept quiet with a phantom freedom, it is much better to give them this than to maintain a swollen and expensive army and police force. When, however, the ruling class find it necessary, owing to the financial and economic crises which arise periodically under property societies, to curtail the standard of living of the workers, they must at the same time restrict those liberties, such as freedom of association, of assembly, of the press, of the ballot, which would afford the aggrieved populace a means of voicing their grievances and would favour the growth of a revolutionary movement. At such times the elements of coercion and brute force that lurk behind the scenes, even in periods of so-called freedom, are brought into the open and government is revealed as no other than tyranny.

Political freedom, at its best, can only be limited, as it maintains the power of property, which, by conferring the right of exploitation, limits the freedom of the exploited, who are the majority of the population. In peacetime, most of the crimes that appear before the courts are offences against the laws of property. The rest are against the state, which is the abstraction comprising the concrete forces (army, bureaucracy, courts, police) that protect the ownership or control of property by the ruling class.

The laws protecting the state find their way into every sphere of life, and involve the prohibition of activities that, at first consideration, would appear to have no bear-

★CHAPTER 4

Personal Liberty and Culture

THE ULTIMATE END of anarchism is the freedom of the individual, and any survey of anarchism must consider this object.

As I have already said, few anarchists contend that absolute individual freedom is possible, or, indeed, desirable. A solitary life, detached from all contact with his fellows, is the only one in which a man could enjoy such a degree of liberty. But man is a social being, depending for his well-being on working and living together in society. And one cannot conceive a society in which man would be devoid of obligations, both of omission and of commission, towards his fellows.

The freedom anarchists seek, then, is a reciprocal freedom, a freedom of men and women recognising each other's rights, a freedom based on justice. By justice is meant not the artificial justice of state laws, but the justice that springs naturally from the needs of a society of free men with common and equal rights in the means of production. Without such justice freedom is impossible.

Political freedom the right to vote, trial by jury, freedom of speech and press - does not constitute real freedom. Indeed it masks the unfree nature of the society from which it springs. The right to vote means the right to choose whether one will have a brewer or a lawyer for a master. It does not mean the right to do without a master. Trial by jury means the right to be judged by a handful of petty tradesmen, in accordance with the laws of a society based on property and class. It does not mean the right to be judged by any standard of absolute justice. Freedom of speech and press as they exist in every so-called democratic country, are so limited by laws against sedition, libel and obscenity, that they are very far from the right of a man to say or write what he considers the truth - especially if that truth is unpleasant to his rulers!

Political freedom in a class society is virtually meaningless. It may make life slightly easier in some ways than it is under dictatorship. But it is strictly limited in the interests of the controlling class, and its availability is in relation to the class and economic position of the man concerned. To have no money is sufficient reason to be imprisoned under the English poor law. (There could be no better example of the difference between justice and the law). To obtain even the limited proportion of justice allowed by the law, it is necessary to have money to pay the lawyers, who have a vested interest in litigation. Similarly, a man cannot stand for parliament unless he has money to pay his deposit and his election expenses. Thus the majority of can-

keep him alive and fit to produce more goods to benefit the owning or directing class. The exactness of approximation to the living standard depends upon the bargaining power of the worker, which is in inverse proportion to the prosperity of industry. Thus, where industry is expanding and the labour pool is small, the workers have a certain power to force a comparatively good standard from the capitalists, in whose interests it is to give concessions rather than risk a stoppage of work which would result in diminished production and consequently lower profits. But, where the market is restricted, where competition between capitalists forces prices down and contracts the margin of profit, where the shrinkage of production and the introduction of economical methods increases the pool of available unemployed labour, the workers, on their part, lose the power to gain ameliorations under the competitive system, and the capitalists on their side are unable to make concessions and at the same time retain an appreciable margin of profits.

In a totalitarian economy the position is somewhat, different. Goods are then, indeed produced primarily for use, and profit becomes a secondary, though still powerful motive. But the use for which the goods are produced is not the happiness of the people, but the needs of the totalitarian state, and in particular the needs of war. This type of use becomes negative, as it is destined primarily for destruction - both of the goods produced and of the means of production of rival totalitarian nations. Thus the worker's position is, in spite of the different basis of production, no better under the totalitarian state than under "democratic" capitalism. He still works under as bad conditions and for as low wages as his masters can impose on him, and produces goods that do not benefit him but which, indeed, are often detrimental to his welfare and destructive to his life.

Under such conditions the worker cannot be expected to take an interest in work which is made irksome by the monotony of a division of labour carried often to the absurdity of a man tightening up nuts all day long on car parts carried past him on a moving band. The factory system as we know it is in itself demoralising; when it is combined with an exploiting system under which a man works long hours for the pittance that keeps him alive, while the major portion of the product of his labour either goes to the rich or is consumed in the mad destruction of war, it is almost impossible for him to have any enthusiasm for his work or any interest in its organisation.

But work in itself is natural to mankind. Man's body and senses were shaped in the evolutionary process to enable him to obtain the food necessary for his sustenance and to avoid death from his natural enemies. Civilisation has mitigated the biological factors that caused such a development. Man does not have to strive so hard for his food, and his natural enemies have been replaced by unnatural ones, which are not to be combated by the same means as the tiger or the snake. But he remains a creature mentally and physically constructed and conditioned for work. By work I do not mean toil, best the measure of exercise that will satisfy the natural demands of his constitution and keep him from mental and physical decay. This exercise can be obtained through sport, but sport, while exercising the body and the faculties, lacks the element of creation or production which lies at the basis of work, and which almost every man needs to make his life complete.

The natural need for work can be seen in the way the craftsman, where he still remains, is devoted to his work; in the way the writer, artist, or doctor with a real vocation will work long and arduous hours on some piece of work from which he can expect to gain little or no remuneration; in the way, even in a factory, some men will enjoy and become devoted to their work if it happens to contain a creative element; and in the way many men engaged in non-productive work, such as ordinary clerical work, will spend their free hours on gardening or some manual craft or artistic employment which fulfils their need for creative work.

The necessity for work, then, springs not from the need to earn money, but from a need for creation that is natural to every man. This need sprang originally from the natural necessity to obtain food, but it has become so much a human attribute that even when nature provides a plentitude of food to be gathered for little labour, as in some tropical countries, man finds it necessary to employ his time on elaborate craftsman's work, such as the images of the natives of Equatorial Africa or the Polynesian islands. Modern competitive society imposes the need to work for money in order to live. A communist society which had abolished money and the wage system would still have to face the need for a certain amount of work, even though much less than at present, in order to keep the community from want. But the present nature of man is such that, even if neither of these conditions were present, if all the food he needed hung on trees and the climate were too warm for clothing, he would still have to find some kind of satisfying creative work to fulfil his spiritual need.

Common work is the basis of society, whatever form that society takes. It is the first social necessity. It is also, as we have seen, a necessity for the individual man. Therefore the need of social man and the need of the individual man coincide, and there seems no human reason to suppose that, once productive work has been divested of the irksome characteristics imposed by the present factory system, men will be disinclined to perform the comparatively small portion of work necessary for their contribution to the common production, or will prove themselves incompetent in the control of the function of which they have, from practice, the most exhaustive knowledge.

These facts were proved, in the event, during the Spanish Revolution, when the workers took over their factories and the peasants collectivised the land, and worked them more successfully than the previous capitalist and feudal owners, so that output in the factories was increased and the production of agricultural goods raised to much more than its pre-revolution level. The workers, having lost their masters, showed no tendency towards indolence. On the contrary, the fact that they were at last controlling their own factories and land and railways gave them an enthusiasm which made them work harder in the cause of the revolution than they had ever worked before. With such an example before us, it seems indeed unlikely that more than a few men will be unwilling to do the much smaller amount of much pleasanter work which will follow the foundation of a free society. And of those few who do not fit in with the normal productive work of society, the majority will probably be artists or have some gift that may benefit the community although it is performed outside

grown in close proximity to the consumer.

It seems possible that the development of the garden city may well be, as Lewis Mumford has suggested, the way to realise Kropotkin's idea of the reintegration of town and country life.

The other modern experiment to which I shall refer offers a hint as to how to reintegrate farm and industrial work. In Belgium, before the war, it had become the custom in certain districts for industrial workers and miners to own or rent smallholdings in the countryside fairly close to their work. They would work, say, four days a week in the factory or mine, and the rest of the week on their holding. It was found that these men had both better health and a higher real standard of living than men who worked a full week in a factory and had no holdings. From this idea we might envisage a form of organisation of groups who would spend part of their time in a workshop and the rest of their weekly, working time on the land adjacent to it.

These two examples give us some idea of the way in which it would be possible to approach Kropotkin's ideal of a society of combined, integrated labour, and institute a form of life in which man's capacities would find better fulfilment through a variety of occupations, each contributing to the balance of a physically and mentally healthier life.

consideration of a revolution must be the provision of adequate food for the people, in order to avoid the circumstance of hunger, which has been the doom of so many revolutions in the present century. The indispensable fighter in any revolution is Comrade Bread.

Another reason which would arise out of the immediate circumstances of the revolution would be the fact that colonial exploitation would cease, the people of the empire would be left to decide for themselves how they would live, and we could expect with no certainty that anything like the former volume of foodstuffs would reach us from the former granaries of capitalist Britain.

The remaining reasons are more of a long-term nature. Firstly, economic regionalism is a corollary of the organisational decentralisation which is one of the main tenets of anarchism, and which would be little more than a myth if it had no economic basis.

Secondly, if food were produced at home, it would be more nourishing because, if an efficient and speedy distribution were arranged, it would not be subjected to the various preservation processes which lower the value of so much food under the import system.

Thirdly, a great expansion of agriculture would help to attain the object of breaking down the barriers between town and country. More intensive work would require more farm workers, and when industry has ceased to be concerned to any great extent with manufacture for export and mass production had been organised on labour saving lines, many men would be free to work in the country.

If rational scientific principles were applied to industry and agriculture, it would be quite possible, by an absorption of people not valuably employed and an elimination of unnecessary labour, to produce a sufficiency of goods in the four hours mentioned by Kropotkin or, probably, in an even shorter daily period of work.

Exactly how the integration of town and country life would take place after the social revolution is something we cannot foretell. It will certainly grow up organically and unpredictably in accordance with the needs of the people.

But I can mention two experiments already born, within contemporary society, which may contain the germs of the future relationship between town and country, farm and industry.

The first is Howard's idea of the garden city. We are inclined to despise garden cities for various reasons, partly because the two most famous became the gathering places of bourgeois oddities, partly because the garden cities founded by Quaker industrialists were hedged with as many restrictions as a prison. But the original idea of the garden city, as expressed by Howard, was intrinsically good. "Town and Country," Howard said, "must be married, and out of this union will spring a new hope, a new life, a new civilisation." Howard envisaged a series of openly built towns, with plenty of garden space within their bounds, as in the medieval city. He suggested a limit of thirty thousand inhabitants, so as to give an urban unit that would have social cohesion without congestion. Each city would be surrounded by a wide belt of country, to be used both for recreation and agriculture. Within the city, industries could be carried out in small hygienic factories; and on the edges food could be

the normal pattern of productive life.

It is largely because they regard work as a natural function of man and one that he will perform quite apart from the compulsion of doing so for fear his individual belly should go empty, that the anarchists advocate the replacement of the wage system and money relationships by the distribution of goods to every man according to his needs, no matter what he does or does not do towards the common work. The need to work for money in order to live is a limitation of freedom. A man can only be truly free when he has his means of livelihood given him freely, without any payment in labour or other coin, and then does what work he is capable and willing to do for the good of the community, which is ultimately his own good. Few men, as I have said, will so lack responsibility that they will fail to carry out their fair share of the communal work.

Commercial distribution would be replaced by communal storehouses from which the goods would be distributed to the members of the commune according to their needs. At first, before the new society was working to its full productive capacity, some form of rationing of scarce goods might be necessary. But later, when a sufficiency of goods was being produced, this would become unnecessary.

It is objected that such a distribution of goods would result in the greedy members of society taking more than their share, and in a general spread of excess of every kind among the population. But the objection ignores the fact that acquisitive greed is the product of a desire to have possessions as a form of security in an insecure society where want and scarcity are the objects of fear, conscious or subconscious, in every grade of society. Remove insecurity and inequality, and the acquisitive urge will die away; remove want and men will not desire luxury. Where money values and exchange are abolished, it will no longer be necessary to gather possessions other than for use.

Even today, few people acquire more of the necessities of life than they actually need for themselves. The money of the rich is spent not on gaining greater quantities of food than they can eat, but on unnecessary objects and activities that acquire an artificial value in modern society because of their scarcity and consequent symbolic relationship to money and privilege. Without a money backing, for instance, diamonds will become as valuable as paste or glass, and no more so.

When the necessities of life are abundant, men will no more think of taking more than they need than a sane man would think of allowing the water tap to run all day just for the satisfaction of having acquired more than his neighbour. Nor will there be any object in hoarding goods, if men are always sure there will be sufficient for their requirements whenever they need it.

The theory of possible excess after the revolution is equally groundless. Excesses spring from social and individual frustration, and when that frustration is mitigated the need to commit excesses diminishes at the same degree. The theory that a man gets drunk because beer is freely available is quite at variance with the facts. He gets drunk to escape from his circumstances, and, if he finds it imperative, will do so at the expense of comforts and even necessities, as is shown by the way many poor working people spend on drink money which they need for food and

clothing. When society has been freed from the slaveries of government and the wage system, from exploitation and privilege, there will be a corresponding liberation of men from many of their frustrations, and, in consequence, a reduced rather than an increased tendency towards excess. The fact that before the war there was less evident drunkenness in Paris, where intoxicants were cheap and always available, than in London, where they were comparatively dear and available only during restricted hours, shows that the availability of liquor has in itself no relationship to the frequency of drunkenness.

The anarchists therefore believe that the free distribution, without obligation, of goods to satisfy the needs of every man will, by making him economically free, give him, a greater incentive to work, both for the community and for his own satisfaction, and that in such a system of free distribution there lies not the temptation to excess but, on the contrary, the influence that will lead men to seek a balanced and healthy life.

We have discussed what are probably the two most important features of the anarchist society, namely, the organisation of production and the method of distribution. It remains to discuss the pattern of organisation of society that would best serve the anarchist objects of free production and distribution.

This pattern is embraced in the doctrine of social decentralisation. The anarchist believes that centralisation of administration leads inevitably, as in the modern state, to the consolidation of power in a few hands. Thus, when the independent town administration of the Middle Ages gave way to the centralised administrations of the great European states, there was a concentration of power in the hands of a few people in the capital city and a gradual loss of liberty and prosperity among the remainder of the population.

Therefore the anarchist believes in the decentralisation of the administrative function. Affairs must be managed by the people they concern. Thus each man will manage the affairs that concern him alone, each family the affairs that concern itself, and so on to the commune and the town, the factory and the farm. Society will be organised as far as possible in the small autonomous units of this type that will be federated, the factories by industry, the communes by region, for the co-ordination of common affairs.

These federal organisations will not exist as organs wielding centralised power. They will merely be the organs through which their constituent units can co-operate and so co-ordinate their activities that the production of goods and services is carried out to ensure an efficient functioning of society. A form of centralism in co-ordination will be necessary, but it will amount to little more than an information bureau through which the various production units can find out what the community needs and organise their own efforts to serve that end without waste or scarcity. This federal bureau will in itself have no power whatever over the units it co-ordinates. It is absurd to imagine that the workers of the factory will need any authority to force them to produce a quantity of goods that will be neither inadequate nor superfluous. Their own sense of responsibility will look after that once they realise it lies in their hands and not in those of some capitalist boss or government department. Authority of any

industrial or agricultural workers, urban or country dwellers. The country must regain its importance in the national life, and a growing flow of population back from the cities will establish new contact between rural and urban areas, which will bring the town masses in touch with the healthier country way of life and establish a means of circulation between land and city which will lead to a just and healthy relationship between the two ways of living and their respective peoples.

The attainment of this object in any country, and particularly in England, would entail a change in the basis of farming as well as that of industry. English farming for the last sixty or seventy years has been an industry not only neglected, but even deliberately retarded by the capitalist ruling class. This was necessary because British manufacturers, exporting to undeveloped countries, had in some way or other to receive commodities in exchange for their exported goods and as interest on the surplus capital invested abroad. So with the export trade in finished articles grew up the parallel import trade in food and raw materials. The basis of English industrial capitalism became the balance of exported manufactures and imported food, and the vital necessity of preserving this balance has dominated to this day the policy of the British governments towards agriculture.

For many years past, the soil of England has not been used for anything like its full potential productivity. In peacetime much less than half the food consumed in England was grown at home. Whereas (as I have demonstrated in *New Life to the Land*), it is possible, given the arable acreage of the heroic age of 1880 and crop yields equivalent to those attained by ordinary farmers in Denmark and the Low Countries; to produce sufficient food (including sugar) to feed the people of Britain at pre-war standards. If the methods perfected in agricultural research were used to attain a really intensive culture, this comparatively low standard (for many of the workers) could be replaced by abundance for all.

These conclusions have been reached not only by anarchists, but also by such agricultural experts as Sir R. G. Stapledon, by such capable farmers as David Lloyd George, and by capitalists, like the Chairman of the I.C.I., largest fertiliser manufacturers in the country, whose interests do not require the maintenance of the Malthusian myth.

The post-war world will find more and more of the countries now undeveloped progressing towards self-sufficiency in manufactured goods. Britain's manufactures may not be needed outside its own borders. And, as one cannot eat ploughshares and chemicals, it is better to use them to grow what one *can* eat.

Self-sufficiency will be forced upon this country, and the breakdown of the imperialist trading system will undoubtedly hasten the end of capitalist society, and provide opportunities for successful revolutionary movements.

But there are more, concrete reasons why anarchists advocate regional self-sufficiency, as opposed to national self-sufficiency.

The first is one of revolutionary strategy. An absolutely simultaneous world revolution is unlikely. A country that revolts may find itself in a hostile world for a period before revolutions follow elsewhere, and in this interim it will almost certainly be subjected to ruthless blockades by the surviving governments. Therefore the first

great aggregations of industry must be broken up and spread over the country, so that there are no longer whole tracts of country dominated entirely by industry.

Certain modern technical developments have made this possible. The invention of the electric grid system has taken away the need for industry to cluster round the coal districts, and the arrival of modern road transport has ended the valley pattern of industry dictated by the railways with their low gradients. Through an extensive dissemination of power from regional centres, thousands of small mills and factories scattered about the country might replace the great factories. Sentimentalists may complain that this would spoil the landscape, but there is no reason why this should happen, as electricity has taken away the filth associated with steam propelled factories, and, as anyone will appreciate who has seen the pre-steam mills around Stroud and also some of the better modern rural factories, there is no reason why an architecturally well designed factory should appear any more out of place in the country than a nobleman's palace. Certain heavy industries or industries involving noxious fumes might have to be segregated, but these would be only a very small proportion of the factories and could probably be much reduced in extent, and unpleasantness.

At the same time it would be necessary to abolish the harmful forms of division of labour. Even in a society not dominated by profit motives there would still have to be a great deal of mass production of certain articles, but where science was used for service and not monetary gain it would no doubt be possible to replace most of the monotonous functions by mechanism. It is not entirely absurd to envisage a form of mass production in which the pattern maker would be the only productive worker, the machinery, governed by a few men in a control room, dealing with the whole process from the entry of the raw materials at one end of the shop to the exit of the finished article at the other end. If the labour needed on mass production could thus be reduced to a minimum; it would be possible for men to devote much of their lives to the wide field for revived craftsmanship which would be opened to those types of production where mass production is, in fact, less desirable or necessary. Similarly, by the use of scientific methods many of the more unpleasant occupations could be improved and reduced in their extent. Coal mining, for instance, could be diminished by the use of other means of providing electric power, by the electrification of railways and workshops, and the development of mining machinery. Other unpleasant work could similarly be reduced or even eliminated by a rational application of scientific knowledge.

There are yet many fields in which scientific research has moved slowly owing to restricting vested interests or to the lack of profit under a capitalist system. In a free society, for instance, new sources of power might well be developed which would change the whole nature of industry. Already the first experiments have been made in the solar engine and the solar accumulator, the development of which has been retarded because they were out of keeping with the vested interests involved in the present forms of power production.

The second necessary change is the breaking down of the distinction between town and country workers. Life will become many-sided. Men will no longer be

kind invariably breeds corruption in those who wield it and irresponsibility in those over whom it is wielded. But give men their freedom and they will manage their own affairs better than anyone else can look after them on their behalf.

Certain essential aspects of the free society seem to need separate consideration and the following chapters will be devoted respectively to Land and Industry, and Personal Liberty and Culture.

★CHAPTER 3

Land and Industry

ONE OF THE FAULTS of modern industrial society lies in the social and economic division between town and country, and the unhealthy preponderance of the urban aggregation over the despoiled and neglected countryside.

This problem has for long received the attention of anarchists, and in particular of Kropotkin, who devoted considerable sections of such works as *Fields, Factories and Workshops* and *The Conquest of Bread* to the consideration of a solution.

The anarchists reach this problem with an attitude that is not biased, like that of Marxists, by a prejudice in favour of the industrial proletariat. The Marxists have been led by their myth of the industrial proletariat, the factory workers, as the conscious class, the leaders of the revolution, to disregard and even to despise the country worker and the country life. They have concerned themselves almost entirely with the problems of the industrial worker considered as such, and their programmes are framed to fit in with their concept of a proletarian dictatorship. We are not here concerned with the mythical nature of this dictatorship, but with the fact that in paying homage to it the Left parties have almost unanimously neglected the land and the country worker.

From the idea of the messianic role of the industrial workers follows the theory that the revolution can only be carried out in an industrial country. In fact, the events of history have disproved this thesis. While the revolution, in the hands of great Left political movements, has retreated in all the industrial countries before the counter-revolution, in the predominantly peasant countries alone has the revolution made a determined stand and the consciousness of the people progressed rather than retreated. It is in countries like Spain, India, China, that we see most hope of an early revolution, just as the revolution has in fact attained its highest degree of realisation in peasant countries, and, very largely, through the action of the peasants themselves.

Experience then, shows, that the industrial workers are no more conscious socially than the peasants, and that the more industrialised a country is, the less effective are its revolutionary movements. From this it would seem that the unnatural lives of industrial workers might make them, in the mass, less conscious than the peasants. To support this, there are two further significant facts.

Firstly, industrial workers in countries based primarily on a peasant economy, who have often been bred as peasants and frequently retain some close contact with

the country, are in general more socially conscious than similar workers in industrial countries, as is shown by the revolutionary progress of the Spanish workers. In a similar manner the most live of the proletariat, both socially and culturally, in England, the classic industrial country, are the miners, who in their peculiar urban circumstances retain frequently a close contact with rural surroundings.

Secondly, farm workers in a primarily industrial country (i.e. a country like England, where the interests of an imperialist industrial capitalism have restricted home agricultural development in favour of food imports from colonial and dependent countries) are, as a result of the prevalence of social standards associated with an industrial society, and also because of the draining away of the younger country men to the industrial and urban areas, comparatively less conscious than Spanish; Mexican or Chinese peasants.

This relatively greater independence and integrity of will and thought is in part an expression of the physically and mentally healthier nature of country life, in part due to the necessary decentralisation of functions in agricultural society, and in part to the tradition of communal life which exists in the villages of all countries. Mutual aid is part of the country life today, as it was in ancient China and fifteenth century Europe, and springs naturally from the necessities of a life not completely controlled by centralised authority, and, indeed, by its very nature not capable of being so controlled.

Rural life, then, tends towards a society based on individual initiative and voluntary co-operation. (It also tends towards better health. People live longer in the country, and, in spite of frequently unsanitary conditions, diseases are less prevalent). The reverse is true of modern industrial life. Industry, both under capitalism and the various totalitarian systems, is based on the factory, the large aggregation of workers. Under these conditions, individual initiative is negated in uniformity, co-operation in regimentation. The workman's function tends to become reduced more and more to mechanical and trivial repetition in a division of labour carried to absurdity and mental stultification in such systems as that of Henry Ford. The factory workers live a mass life, not only in the factory but also in the great urban warrens in which they dwell, cut off from any close or lasting contact with rural life. In the factory system and in the conditions of life that attend it, in the great aggregations of thousands of men working in a functional monotony unavoidable under such a system, there is an inner demoralisation which is the greatest contributory cause of the intellectual sterility of so many of the industrial workers.

It is obvious that in a society based on freedom a system of production that results in mental and emotional slavery cannot be allowed to survive. In an anarchist society there will no longer be any need for men to waste their lives in the monotonous performance of a single function. Freedom must allow a man to become complete, to develop his personality and express his inner needs to the fullest extent possible. And to this end something very different from the present form of industrial organisation must be evolved.

Two changes present themselves as being radical and necessary. Firstly, the anarchist principle of decentralisation must be used in the industrial as well as the administrative field. The factory system must be ended, and, as far as possible, the