

Some remarks on the libertarian conception of revolutionary social change

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I. Introduction

I have been invited to prepare a paper on “prepolitical movements in peripheral areas”. Now I happen to be working in the Department for Anarchism, Spain or Latin America, which is the reason why I shall open this paper by making some critical, paradoxical remarks.

1. If we really wish to focus our attention on the “peripheral areas” and on the problems of the groups and peoples living in such areas, if we wish to contribute to their emancipation, we shall have to abandon the habit of considering these areas or their inhabitants as “peripheral”.
2. When we refer to “prepolitical movements”, our frame of reference is *not* the “peripheral” area itself but a center. The term “peripheral areas” implies the existence of a center and/or center systems that dominate such areas. What is “prepolitical” in the eyes of a center is often purely political — based as it is on common sense and experiences from daily life — seen from the angle of the “peripheral areas”. What is considered by the center as a “normal political process” is often experienced as oppression by inhabitants of the “peripheral areas”.
3. The “peripheral” situation of an area is *created*; it is the result of exploitation by another area, i.e. the center.

The well-known theories on “development of underdevelopment” and internal colonization, the studies by A. Gunder Frank, R. Stavenhagen and many others have changed the social scientist’s orientation. They have focused the attention on the character of this relation between center and peripheral areas and on the need for emancipation of these areas through destruction of the center’s exploitative domination.

The first problem that faces us in this connection is: what exactly is a peripheral area, a peripheral situation, a peripheral group?

“*All happy marriages are alike, all unhappy marriages are different*” is the famous opening sentence of Tolstoi’s novel *Anna Karenina*. Paraphrasing Tolstoi we might say: all centers are alike, all peripheral areas are different. Of course it is not true that all centers — or happy marriages for that matter — are completely alike. Nevertheless, all centers show common characteristics and the same development: modernization based on technology, urbanization, the same conception of growth, large institutions inevitably attended with bureaucratization, alienation and depersonalization, domination of environment and of peripheral areas. Seen from the center’s angle, all peripheral areas constitute the same problem: their adjustment to the center.

Peripheral areas are always pluriform and differ from each other. In the case of most of the old Indian communities in Latin America, for example, each community is

a universe in itself, has its own identity¹, differs from neighbouring villages. However, their relation to the center is more or less the same for all of them. But what have these Indian communities in common with, for instance, the Indian tribes of the Amazonas trying to avoid every contact with the modern world, with the old city mobs, with the pueblos and villages in Andalusia or Sicily or with the Lumpenproletariat, which are all considered peripheral?

The problem is further complicated by the fact that some social groups or areas may have a peripheral as well as a center character. The city mob described in Eric Hobsbawm's *"Primitive Rebels"* is a good example². Inside the city, the mob was considered peripheral by the authorities and by the court but, at the same time, it formed part of the city and profited from the city's exploitation of the peripheral peasants and the country-side. According to the theories on internal colonization I have mentioned the national centers in development countries are considered peripheral by international centers like New York or Washington, which dominate and exploit these countries. Clearly, the peripheral character of an area depends on its relation to other areas.

For the purpose of the present paper I have made an attempt to classify the different types of center-peripheral relations, without aiming at completeness. As you will see, several social groups fit into more than one category of this classification. Where I use the word "area" I refer to a social rather than to a geographical concept.

- A. Cultures and societies completely strange and alien to the center, in no way "integrated", "savage" in the eyes of the center. Their fate often is complete destruction following their entrance into the center's orbit. In our time the Amazonian Indians form a tragic example.
- B. Peripheral areas related to a center and belonging to its socio-economic and political structures which try, at the same time, to defend and maintain their identities, their "selfness". They are dominated by the center, menaced in their existence by its economic expansion. By the center's standards they are "backward" I lagging behind, underdeveloped. Good examples are the Indian communities of Mexico and the Andean countries. Other examples in this category — we should perhaps speak of subgroup B.1. — are small producers, skilled workers and peasants threatened in their economic and social existence by the center's

¹ In his study on a Tarascan community the Dutch cultural anthropologist Van Zantwijk gives a useful definition of "identity" in connection with the larger center, the Meztizo culture. *"The word identity is here used in a relative sense. (...) It refers to the whole complex of elements or aspects of social and cultural life which differentiates Tarascan society from the Meztizos"*. (R.A. M. Van Zantwijk, *The Social and Cultural Identity of a Tarascan community in Mexico*, Assen, 1961, p.106).

² E. J. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels. Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, Manchester, 1959, p. 115. *Nothing was easier than for the "popolino" (little people) thus to identify itself with city and rulers. Miserable and destitute though it was, it was not directly exploited by the Bourbon or Papal court, but it was on the contrary its parasite, sharing, however modestly, in the city's general exploitation of the provinces and the peasants.*

progress and still fighting for their independence. Barrington Moore describes these anticapitalistic movements as “the dying wail of a class over whom the wave of progress is about to roll”³.

- C. Economic classes or even socio-economic systems that used to belong to a center but which have fallen back into a peripheral position following technological innovations and socio-economic developments in the center. Cases in point are: the Lumpenproletariat, victim of the industrial revolution; the army of permanently unemployed during the Depression in the Thirties and the inhabitants of areas catering for a world market that has changed, such as the plantations in North-Eastern Brazil and the Caribbean region. The “wave of progress” has already left its mark on these people.
- D. Social classes and groups that form part of the center in an economic sense but are peripheral in a social, cultural and/or political sense the working classes, the proletariat in emerging industrial societies.
- E. Marginal groups and sub-cultures that do not play an active economic role inside the center. — young people, students, artists, intellectuals, drop-outs bohemians.
- F. Center-peripheral relations of a political nature, either between states or inside them: colonial and imperialist relations, capital-versus province relations, etc. Such political relations in the capitalist system run parallel with the economic relations mentioned above subgroup F.1. if you wish: neo-capitalist domination, internal colonization and exploitation.

Summarizing we can say that peripheral areas are areas which are dominated by a center. It is the center which creates this relation. Prepolitical as well as political movements in such areas make it their object to change this subordinate position.

Successful *political* movements in peripheral areas have resulted in the emergence of independent national states, the process of nation-building with its cultural and economic implications.

At the end of the nineteenth century the great majority of historians and social scientists held the opinion that the world’s center was formed by North-Western Europe or, in more scientific terms, the North-Atlantic industrial, commercial, liberal and capitalist societies. The “rest” of our earth was considered more or less peripheral, even backward, whereby the degree of back-wardness was measured by the standards of the North-West European center.

Our century has witnessed an emancipation process. The idea that Europe or the North-Atlantic societies are the center of the world has disappeared, not only in Latin America, Africa and Asia but even in Europe. However, the emancipation process of the

³ Barrington Moore Jr., *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the making of the Modern World*, Boston, 1966, p. 505.

once peripheral Third World has resulted in the formation of many new center systems rather than the creation of a new relation — based on equality, not on exploitation — between centers and peripheral areas. Even people who are aware of the “selfness” of their national society: its specific and unique historical development and identity, have neglected the peripheral aspects of this development. An illustrative example is formed by Gilberto Freyre’s classic book “*The Masters and the Slaves*”. The importance of this book for the creation of a *Brazilian* out-look on the history, society and culture of this country, for the creation of the Brazilian nation, has been compared with the role of the Mexican revolution in Mexican society⁴. But Freyre takes no interest in the famous Negro Republic of Palmares. (He only mentions Palmares twice, in footnotes). The free Negro society remains as peripheral in the Brazil centered outlook as it does in the Europe-centered out look. The same applies to the Indian revolts and other past and present peripheral movements in the Spanish-speaking parts of Latin America. The center system of the 19th century, dominated by the North-Atlantic societies, is being substituted by a multiform system of center-peripheral relations, which does not contribute to the emancipation of the peripheral areas and groups.

What is happening; on a world scale — the emergence of many national or center systems — has likewise happened inside the North-Atlantic society itself, where a subculture of workers has sprung up. Organized labour, for a long time considered peripheral, is now being accepted as one center — among many — of power and politics. But for many years other traditional aspects of the labour movement such as direct action, self -organization, solidarity, mutual aid and the whole of anarchist history and ideology remained peripheral and prepolitical historical curiosities and historical failures.

Prepolitical movements in peripheral areas are those movements that:

- a) have tried to preserve their identities,
- b. have refused to create new forms of center-peripheral relations. — and
- c. Have been unsuccessful measured by political standards of power.

For many years “Flowers to the rebels that failed” has been the guiding principle of students of these movements. Today there is a growing awareness that such studies afford important clues not only for the under-standing of the past or of “backward” areas, but also of our society and our future. In recent years the number of social scientists — cultural anthropologists as well as historians who have come to study the Institute’s

⁴ Frank Tannenbaum, *Introduction to Gilberto Freyre’s The Mansions and the Shanties (Sobrados e Mucambos). The making of Modern Brazil, New York, 1966, pp. XI-XII. ... the Brazilians have discovered themselves (...). They no longer wish to be Europeans (...). The Masters and Slaves, published in 1933, was a revelation for the Brazilian intellectuals, artists, novelists; poets, musicians and architects, they turned their eyes inward and began to sing a song of themselves (...). The only other Latin American country where a similar development took place is Mexico. But there it required a bloody revolution.*

historical collection on anarchism in order to get a better insight in the Present social structures and problems of villages, peasant movements, etc. in Spain and Latin America has shown a remarkable increase. In addition, many people, interested and involved in anti authoritarian experiments and struggles since the Sixties, have come to study the libertarian outlook in the history of socialism.

In this paper I shall concentrate my attention on the anarchist tradition, because anarchism is an ideology which refuses to create new center systems with new peripheral areas. My intention is to compare the anarchist and Marxist attitudes towards center-peripheral relations and problems, especially in relation to the process of social change. Revolutionary Marxists, social reformists and, in general, most of the leftists always want to *use* the center as an instrument — and in practice as *the* instrument for the emancipation of mankind. Their model is always a center: state or party or army. The evolution to them means in the first place the take-over of the center and its power structure, or the creation of a new center, in order to use it as an instrument for the construction of a new society. Anarchists do not wish to take over the center; they want its immediate destruction. It is their opinion that after the revolution there will be hardly any room left for a center in the new society. The struggle against the center is their revolutionary model and in their strategy anarchists try to avoid the creation of a new center.

“We will conquer not so that we may follow the example of past years and hand over our fate to some new master, but to take it in our own hands and conduct our lives according to our own conception of truth”⁵, declares one of the first proclamations of the anarchist Makhno’s movement in the Ukraine during the Russian revolution. These words express the general anarchist credo and would seem to express the credo of all movements in peripheral areas.

II. The anarchist movement

Anarchism as a movement was born at the time of the First International. After the split in this organization following the congress held in The Hague in 1872, the

⁵ Cited by Paul Avrich, in *Russian Anarchists*, Princeton, 1967, p. 212.

In *Zapata and the Mexican Revolution*, New York, 1969, p. 303, John Womack Jr. quotes from a Zapatista manifesto written by C. Díaz Soto y Gama. *Where is the Revolution going? What do the sons of the people arisen in arms propose for themselves? (...) to redeem the indigenous race, giving it back its lands and by that its liberty.*

Carlos Semprun Maura writes as follows about the Durruti Column in *Révolution et Contrerévolution en Catalogne (1936–1937)*, Tours, 1974, p. 30. *Elle avancera en Aragon comme une armée de libération sociale, appliquant la méthode préconisée par l’anarchiste italien Malatesta s’emparer d’une ville ou d’un village, y mettre les représentants de l’Etat hors de nuire et inviter la population à s’organiser librement elle-même. Je n’ai pas le moins du monde l’intention de donner ici une vision idyllique, cela ne fut pas toujours fait sans conflits, sans erreurs, voire crimes, mais cela fut fait.*

majority of the First International declared their adherence to the libertarian concept of the revolutionary struggle and the strategy to be followed.

Until the First World War anarchism, in its different forms, was one of the main forces in the international labour movement. Strongholds were to be found in the “Latin” countries of Europe and among European immigrant workers in North and South America. Anarchist minorities or ideas played a more or less important part in nearly all countries where socialist labour movements had sprung up.

With the onset of World War I — and even before — anarchism rapidly declined in many countries except in Latin America and on the Iberian Peninsula, where it continued to play a significant role until the end of the Twenties and until the end of the Spanish Civil War; respectively. It was only in Spain that anarchism attracted great masses of workers and only there that the movement played a decisive part in the country’s history, reaching its climax in the social revolution during the Civil War.

It is difficult to give a good definition of anarchism. In my opinion anarchism is the struggle towards an open and universal, self-controlling and self-steering socialist society, a society in which coercive authority has been replaced by a process of decision-making that does not give rise to alienation between the individual and the decisions reached. Under socialism I understand the realization of the ideals of the French revolution—Liberty, equality and brotherhood⁶.

Terms like “self-controlling”, “self-steering”, etc., indicate the explicit opposition of anarchism against the state, even in its representative, parliamentary forms, and its refusal to participate in “normal” — i.e. center politics.

Many observers have suggested a close similarity between anarchism and more traditional prepolitical forms of direct democracy, such as the Russian Mir, the Spanish pueblo, the medieval city guilds, the Indian communities in the Andes, etc. This similarity has aroused some rather unjust criticism. Firstly, critics of anarchism did not

⁶ A well-known definition by Peter Kropotkin, included in the article on Anarchism in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* reads as follows:

Anarchism is the name given to a principle or theory and conduct under which society is conceived without government — harmony in such a society being obtained, not by submission to law, or by obedience to any authority; but by free agreements conducted between the various groups, territorial and professional, freely constituted for the sake of production and consumption, as also for the satisfaction of the infinite variety of needs and aspirations of a civilized being ...

Two other interesting definitions, in my opinion, are the following:

J’ai voulu, par ce mot (anarchie), marquer le terme extrême du progrès politique. L’anarchie est, si je peux m’exprimer de la sorte, une forme de gouvernement, ou constitution, dans laquelle la conscience publique et privée, formée par développement de la science et du droit, suffit seule au maintien de l’ordre et à la garantie de toutes les libertés, où par conséquent le principe d’autorité, les institutions de police, les moyens de prévention ou de répression, le fonctionnarisme, l’impôt, etc., se trouvent réduits à leur expression la plus simple ... P. J. Proudhon, *Correspondance*, XIV, Paris, 1875, p. 32).

... das Grundprinzip in der Anarchie, die Sicherung der freiesten Entwicklungsmöglichkeiten durch positive Förderung (intelligente Solidarität) and Beseitigung der Hindernisse und Hemmungen (Zwang und freiwillige Knechtschaft). (Max Nettlau, *Anarchisten und Sozialrevolutionäre. Die Historische Entwicklung des Anarchismus in den Jahren 1880–1886*, Berlin, 1931, p. 5).

take anarchist opposition to the state as such very seriously because anarchists appeared to propagate these older “state”-like decision-making bodies, which they did. What the critics did not realize was that the anarchists were oppose to the *national* state because of its inherently authoritarian structure, resulting in alienation of and lack of control by the poor. Such a structure never existed in the communities and institutions mentioned⁷. Secondly, the critics took the anarchists’ interest in direct democratic forms for “evidence” that anarchism was — to use the terms of this conference — a prepolitical movement in a peripheral area. However, anarchism did venture to introduce self-controlling and self-steering bodies into *modern industrial society*: workers’ control, syndicalism, etc.⁸, the problems of scale, coordination and change arising from this conception of direct democracy — though sometimes neglected in the movement — have been recognized by most anarchist writers. The failure to cope with these problems is behind Kropotkin’s analysis of the decline of such self-steering bodies as the. guilds, etc⁹. Characteristic if the anarchist conception is the emphasis put on solidarity, internationalization, responsibility, education, or, in other words, the creation of the *conscious worker* ready to race and solve the problems confronting him.

It is for this reason that I have included the words “open and universal” in my definition of anarchism: They indicate the significance of the “idea” and underline the difference with the old — closed — forms of direct democracy.

Ever since Gerald Brenan published his *Spanish Labyrinth*¹⁰ all historians have emphasized the significance of the Idea in the Spanish anarchist movement. This Idea has often been considered as an archaic element, a substitute for religion. It was, on the

⁷ See, for instance: Eric Wolf, “Peasants Wars of the Twentieth Century”, New York, 1969, pp. 6061, for descriptions of egalitarian participation in the Russian Mir and its mode of achieving consensus: *The achievement of unanimity produced a profound sense of satisfaction and for village solidarity, and the members of the village assembled at the mir disperse without a vote having been taken, with no committee formed and yet the feeling that each man knows what is expected of him.* In G. Gorier and. J. Rirkman, *The People of Great Russia*, New York, 1951, p. 233.

⁸ Today is has become fashionable to consider workers’ control, councils, autogestion as fundamental ideas of Marxism and even of Marx himself. An older generation of students of Marx knew better than that *proudhonism is the direct ancestor of modern syndicalism (.,) the units out of which the anti-capitalist force must be constituted should contain men connected not by common convictions, — a mere intellectual substructure — but by the actual occupations which they pursues, since is the essential factor which determines their acts.* Isaiah Berlin, *Karl Marx. The Life and Environment*, 2nd edition, Oxford, 1943, p. 119 (first published 1939).

⁹ P. Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid. A Factor of Evolution*, London, 1914, (New Impression. of Third Edition of 1904), pp. 217–218: *The fundamental idea of the medieval city was grand, but it was not wide enough. Mutual aid and support cannot be limited to a small association; they must spread to its surroundings, or else the surroundings will absorb the association; they must spread to its surroundings, or else the surroundings will absorb the association.*

Kropotkin’s picture of the medieval city has been criticized by other anarchists such as M. Nettlau, who found it too flattering.

¹⁰ Gerald Brenan, *The Spanish Labyrinth. An Account of the Social and Political Background of the Civil War*, Cambridge, New York, first published 1943.

contrary, something new and involved a rupture with the past. The conscious worker not only had the autonomous community in mind but also la International¹¹.

It will be clear from the foregoing that I do not consider Spanish anarchism — or any other form of anarchism — as the reflection of backwardness. People who hold this view must have concentrated most of their attention on Andalusian anarchism and have neglected, or explained away, the fact that the anarchist movement in industrial Barcelona and Catalonia — the center of modern Spain — was just as strong as it was in Andalusia, right from the First International until 1939. One of the arguments used to explain away Catalan anarchism was that the ideology would not be indigenous but, instead, would have been introduced by immigrant workers from Southern Spain — the “Murcianos”; another one that Catalan anarcho-syndicalism was no “pure” form of anarchism but something in between “real” anarchism and “modern” trade-unionism. The first argument has been popular among Catalan nationalists reluctant to admit the existence of a strong indigenous anarchist movement. In reality, Catalan anarchism emerged at the time of the First International and had its roots in much older Catalan workers’ organizations. It is not true, either, that the main strongholds of militant anarchism in Southern Spain supplied many migrant workers. In many cases, Catalonia was not the only modern part of Spain to know anarchist movements. Other strongholds were Valencia (town and “país”), with its export agriculture, the Galician towns, Asturias¹².

¹¹ The difference with the Carlists — no doubt a prepolitical movement in peripheral area, but one strongly opposed to any “open and universal” new ideas — was felt keenly by the Spanish anarchists.

At the time of the Alcoy rising of 1873, the revolutionaries were accused of complicity with Don Carlos. *El Condenado, Periódico Colectivista Defensor de la Internacional*, replied to this accusation as follows: *Las masas carlistas fanatizadas por el clero combaten por un nuevo amo, y esto tranquiliza a nuestros explotadores; las masas socialistas combaten por no tener amo y por ser dueñas del fruto de su trabajo, por la justicia en una palabra, y por esto les explotadores se ponen fuera de sí.*

“Socialistas” are the members of the International, followers of the anarchist tendency. See Clara E. Lida, *Anarquismo y Revolución en la España del XIX*, Madrid, 1972, p. 226.

¹² J. Romero Maura, The Spanish Case. In: *Anarchism Today*, ed. by David E. Apter and James Joll, London, 1971, p. 63: *The size of industries and the modernity of the different industrial sectors have not been found to relate consistently to the expansion of the different trade-union denominations outside Spain. Inside Spain, there is no evidence either to support such a view. (...) The evidence is very fragmentary. But there are too many examples to the contrary. The union of typesetters was for a longtime the socialist stronghold in Madrid and the anarchist one in Barcelona. At the turn of the century; broadly speaking; the miners of Asturias were socialist and the surface workers anarchist.*

See David Ruiz, *El Movimiento Obrero en Asturias*, Oviedo, 1968, p. 100. It seems, however, that at the start of the Civil War, a large proportion of Asturian miners was anarchist. See C. M. Lorenzo, *Les Anarchistes et la politique*, p. 175, note 26. The Catalan miners who rebelled in January 1932 were anarchists. In the early 1930’s the dockers of Barcelona and Gijón were anarchists; while those of Seville were communist. Apparently the two main nuclei of anarchism in Madrid were workers... and the employees of the Telephone Company.

In Barcelona and the rest of Catalonia, they do not seem to have controlled the large textile mills and metallurgic plants any less than that did the small factories.

The second argument has thereby also been refuted. I see anarcho-syndicalism as the expression of anarchist attitudes among industrial workers. Anarcho-syndicalism in Spain, as elsewhere, emerged as a movement because many anarchists found Kropotkin's communist anarchism inadequate to solve the problems of modern society and too optimistic about the libertarian reorganization of society of after the revolution, which Kropotkin believed to be an easy matter. Anarcho-syndicalism was in a sense a revival of Bakunin's strategy to connect the daily struggle with the revolutionary struggle. In its orientation, outlook and strategy, anarcho-syndicalism remained thoroughly anarchist. More so than in France, Spanish anarcho-syndicalism had its origins in the anarchist movement and in anarchist ideas¹³.

Another interesting aspect of Andalusian anarchism is that recent research by historians and cultural anthropologists¹⁴ has shown that the emergence of the anarchist movement in Andalusia was the result of socio-economic changes which occurred in the course of the 19th century and which led to modernization and commercialization of the latifundia system and, consequently, to less work, less "social security"¹⁵ and less land for the labourers. The "law and order" aspect of this change is represented by the guardia civil, the political aspect is reflected in the rise of the caciquismo system, under which local establishment and oppression became interwoven with the national political system¹⁶.

Nevertheless, the view that the Catalan CNT was strongly influenced by the "agrarian-religious crises" in the South is still put forward by Gerald H. Meaker, in *The Revolutionnary Left in Spain, 1914-1923*, Stanford, 1974.

¹³ See Romero Maura, *The Spanish Case. op. cit.* and, by the same author. "Les Origines de l'Anarcho-syndicalisme en Catalogne. 1900-1909", in *Anarchici e Anarchia nel mondo contemporaneo. Atti del Convegno promosso dalla Fondazione Luigi Einaudi (Torino 5, 6 e 7 dicembre 1969)*, Torino, 1971. In other countries revolutionary syndicalism was strongly anti-reformist but the anarchist ideology was not as important as it was in Spain. This may be one reason why many revolutionary syndicalist organizations turned either to the (communist) Profintern or to reformism. The international working Men's Association, founded in Berlin (1922-23) was the first real anarcho-syndicalist international.

¹⁴ I would like to mention the interesting historical study by Temma Kaplan — a manuscript of which is at the IIHS. *The Social Base of Nineteenth Century Andalusian Anarchism in Jerez de la Frontera*, (to be) published in the *Journal of Interdisciplinary, History*. This study contains significant corrections on the views held by Juan Díaz del Moral *Historia de las agitaciones campesinas andaluzas*, Madrid, 1929, Brenan, *op. cit.*, and Hobsbawm, *op. cit.*

Juan Martínez-Alier, in a cultural anthropological study, untitled: *Labourers and Landowners in Southern Spain*, London, 1971, is highly critical of the conclusions drawn by J.A. Pitt-Rivers. *The People of the Sierra*, first published in 1954.

¹⁵ A kind of social security consisted in the *alojamiento*, a traditional system of solving unemployment (...) by allocating labourers to landowners. See Juan Martínez-Alier, *op.cit.*, pp. 78-79.

¹⁶ Spain was the first European country to introduce "universal" suffrage (for men only). This came to create a link between existing local oppression and the center and thus strongly encouraged the caciquismo system. In Italy, the extension of the franchise favoured the Mafia. See Hobsbawm, *op. cit.*, p. 43. 18

While acting as a counter — active force in this development, the anarchist movement evolved a new ideology, a new consciousness. I shall return to this process of “creating something new in the process of counteraction” because it seems to me that this is world-wide phenomenon with great relevance for our subject.

When we direct our attention to the anarchist and revolutionary movements in other countries we recognize the same picture as in Spain: anarchism in both cities and industrial centers and in agricultural areas. In France and Germany anarchism flourished in the big industrial cities. In Italy the large provincial towns — in the Romagna, in Ancona, Carrara — were the major strongholds, in Holland and Sweden it was the capitals and the agricultural and forestall areas. In Latin America anarchists held a strong position in the major cities of the La Plata region, especially in Rosario — “the Barcelona of Latin America — with its modern industrial pattern”¹⁷. In Mexico both the agrarian ideology and Zapatistas underwent a pronounced anarchist influence. In the U.S.A. there was a strong proletarian anarchist movement among immigrant workers (Italians, Spaniards and Eastern “European Jews”) and among IWW, -workers in the “frontier” -areas as well as a marked libertarian and intellectual tradition based on the small self-supporting community and American individualism. In Russia the agrarian Makhno movement underwent great influence from anarchism and in Bulgaria; too, anarchist influence was concentrated in agrarian areas. As you can see, it is very difficult to make any generalization at all.

Anarchism is often explained by other than socio-economic factors, such as the personality structure of the individual anarchist and other such psychological factors. But a psychological approach does not serve to answer the question why anarchism should have vanished. In trying to answer this question I would like: once more to

¹⁷ Different studies about anarchist movements in different countries reach the following conclusions:

Germany *Der deutsche Anarchismus war eine Grossstadt-Bewegung getragen von der Industriearbeiterschaft, mit einer Kleinen intellektuellen Spitze aus der Grossstadt-Inteligenz und Bohème und eienr ganz begrenztenr Wirkungsmöglichkeit auf die in der Grossstadt sich zusammenfindenden Lumpenproletariats-Existenz.*

Ulrich Linse, *Organisierter Anarchismus im Deutschen Kaiserreich von 1871*, Berlin, 1969, s. 119.

France ... *nuances apportées, nous ne pouvons que souligner le caractère ouvrier du mouvement anarchiste communiste des origines à nos jours, mouvement qui se distingue donc sans doute très peu des autres courants politiques de la gauche, des adhérents ou militants.*

J. Maitron, Un “Anar” qu’est-ce que c’est, in *Le Mouvement Social* No. 83, avril-juin 1973, p. 45. The same number contains information on the regional spreading of anarchist influence in *Italy* and the *Netherlands*.

The countries of the River Plate *Anarchism was, from the beginning and up to the 1930s, a predominantly workers’ movement, based on the urban proletariat — even though at its peak it occasionally and some organization among and response from the peasants.* Eduardo Colombo, *Anarchism in Argentina and Uruguay*, in: *Anarchism Today*, op. cit., p. 183.

Russian anarcho-syndicalists *Between 1905 and 1907, Novomirskii’s South Russian Group of Anarcho-Syndicalists attracted a considerable number of workers in the large cities of the Ukraine and New Russia, as well as intellectuals from the Social Democrats, SR’s, and AnarchistCommunists.* P. Avrich, op. cit., p. 78.

go back to my definition. I think that the existence or non-existence of anarchist and anarcho-syndicalist movements has something to do with the question whether, in the people's minds, the possibility of self-controlling groups was, or is, a *realistic* possibility to form and maintain autonomous groups of conscious individuals is fading away. Although there is a "link" with socio-economic development — more alienation implying less anarchism — the connection is only an indirect one; the growth of the state apparatus, war and militarization is at least as important as the increase of alternative, economic relations between workers mutually and between workers and their work.

I shall return later to the growing importance of ties in society as a factor in the decline of anarchism.

The popular view that anarchism is an "early" form of workers' movement and for that very reason remained strong in "backward" Spain after modern socialism and communism had made their entry elsewhere has no general validity at all.

In Northern Europe — Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands — anarchism emerged *after* and as a reaction to the Marxist reformism of the growing socialist parties. In Spain it depended on region — not on time — whether a socialist or anarchist movement evolved. In Catalonia reformist and Socialist trade-unionism — organized in Las Tres Clases de Vapores — had come to full development *before* the rise of the anarcho-syndicalist CNT.

Anarchism fell in decline after the First World War¹⁸. Although the influence of this war, the Depression and the totalitarian regimes in the Thirties, the Second World War, (19) the: Cold War, events which were accompanied by a general cultural and ideological climate that admitted nothing else but mass admiration, unification and large scale centralized organizations.

The revival in the Sixties of libertarian ideas, movements and forms of organization in Europe and the U.S.A. had almost nothing to do with the old movement, its remnant, or the socio-economic groups which had once backed it. It had very much to do with a new generation of conscious individuals, who had become of the fact that in modern society life is dominated by large institutions beyond the control of the individual and who were in search of new forms of self-controlling and self-steering organizational structures to be used in the struggle for social change and a better way of life.

¹⁸ Eric J. Hobsbawm has argued anarchism and revolutionary syndicalism had lost much of their revolutionary potential as early as 1914 *The crucial historical fact here is the dramatic decline of anarchist (or anarcho-syndicalist) influence in the decade after 1914. In the belligerent countries of Europe this was a neglected aspect of the general collapse of the prewar left. This is usually presented primarily as a crisis of social-democracy; and with much justification. At the same time it was also a crisis of the libertarian or ant bureaucratic revolutionaries in two ways. First, many of them (e.g. among "revolutionary syndicalists") joined the bulk of Marxist social-democrats in the rush to the patriotic banners — at least for a time.*

III. The social forces behind social change

1. The center's view on the forces behind social change: Free-Enterprise and Marxism

The old liberal and the modern free-enterprise views deny the existence of, any fundamental contradiction or antagonism between center and peripheral areas in the process of social change. With the development of the center the peripheral areas — like working classes inside the center — were to follow and, in the long run, benefit from the social changes and share in the center's profits. This was the philosophy behind the arguments on the terms of trade in the liberal world. It is still the official philosophy of the Western world, with its faith in economic growth. It was behind Kennedy's "liberal and democratic" Alliance for Progress and is behind the Brazilian policy of today. Its weak point is nicely summed up in Keynes' famous remark. "In the long run we are all dead". The poor have to pay the price of progress.

Although Marx and Marxism seem far away from the philosophies on social change just described the frames of reference that result appear to resemble each other in many respects.

Marx had a very clear conception of social change. It had to be revolutionary, because he believed in a fundamental antagonism between social classes. Marx concentrated his attention on one antagonism: the one between the owners of the means of production in a private capitalist society and the proletarians obliged to sell their labour to the capitalists. He was only interested in the *one* center-peripheral relation mentioned under D of my classification. And there is reason to argue that this relation is no real center peripheral relation at all: from an economic point of view — and economics provided the fundamental keys for Marx — the industrial workers are part of the center, part of the capitalist system. In any case Marx was not interested in the other peripheral areas and groups have mentioned. He did see the misery, the tragedy of the peripheral areas, but he saw them as the victims of a *historical process*, which he evaluated as inevitable and positive. In his opinion the social role of peripheral areas was a conservative and even reactionary one. They had to be destroyed by the center and the emerging capitalists if society was to enter the realm of socialism.

Marxism shows the same disdain as the liberal bourgeoisie for the Lumpenproletariat, independent peasant organization and struggle, independent manual workers and primitive cultures. In Marx' conception the only progressive forces are the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. There is no contradiction between this progressive role allotted to the bourgeoisie and its reactionary role in the class struggle against the proletariat. The bourgeoisie represents a revolutionary force in the process of building -a capitalist society, a reactionary force in the struggle for socialism by the proletariat — the grave-diggers, created by capitalism itself. Whenever the capitalist center system, in the course of its growth, created, attacked or disrupted peripheral areas, Marx sided with "history", with the bourgeoisie. An illuminating example is an article in

Marx' newspaper "*Die Neue Rheinische Zeitung*", written by his friend Fr. Engels in 1849. In an attack against Bakunin, Engels speaks about the occupation — in 1847 — of California by the U.S.A. The occupation was a naked act of Yankee imperialism directed against Mexico, a fact which Engels did not deny but which did not matter in his eyes. To him the important thing was that by conquering California on the "lazy Mexicans", the "energetic Yankees" had acted in the interested of civilization, because they would open up California and the Pacific to world trade, exploit the area's natural resources, etc¹⁹.

It was only in the centers of capitalism that the industrial proletariat made up a large proportion of the population and, accordingly Marx expected the revolution to take place in the most highly industrialized countries, such as England and Germany. The idea that revolutions could take place in areas peripheral to capitalism and the conception of "counteracting forces, creating something new" are completely alien to Marxism.

The writings of Marx himself do contain elements of a less dogmatic center-approach. Famous is his letter to Vera Zasulich, in reply to a plain question about the Mir, the Russian peasant community. In it Marx admits that the Mir — a peripheral factor in the Russian Capitalism development — could become "an element of regeneration for Russian society and an element of superiority over the countries enslaved to the capitalist regime²⁰". It is interesting that Marx has obviously fretted long over this letter of forty lines; the draft counts many as nine hundred. The ideological doctrines of the social-democratic and communist parties missed the scientific hesitations of their master.

In their practical policies European socialist and communist parties followed other guidelines than ideological and theoretical ones, their response to the "colonial question" consisted in a general anti-capitalist mood because the colonized people were exploited by the same — capitalist — masters as the European workers. With the growing opportunism of the European parties, the anti-colonialist attitude receded

¹⁹ Second, these who did not, proved, on the whole, quite ineffective in their opposition to the war, and even less effective at the end of the war in their attempts to provide an alternative libertarian revolutionary movement to the Bolsheviks.

Eric J. Hobsbawm, "Bolshevism and Anarchism" in, *Anarchici e Anarchia*, op. cit. p. 476.

It is my personal opinion that the crises in the European anarchist movements set in an even earlier stage, after 1890: *...ich möchte behaupten, dass die Geschichte des Anarchismus ausserhalb Spaniens nach 1890 eigentlich die Geschichte des Suchens nach den richtigen Methoden gewesen ist.* Rudolf de Jong, "Entstehung und Entwicklung des Anarchismus" in *Ich will weder befehlen noch gehorchen, Marxismus und Anarchismus*, Band 2, Berlin, 1975, s. 60, lectureheld in 1967.

After 1890 the phenomenon of "*la dispersion des tendances*" as J. Maitron has called it in his *Histoire du Mouvement anarchiste en France (1880-1911)*, Paris, 1951, can be noted everywhere. Anarcho-syndicalism constituted the major response to this crisis. However, ups and downs and crises are in the nature of anarchist movements. The routine character of many anarchist periodicals may well be an indication of real crises in movement and ideal.

²⁰ It was only in neutral Sweden that the European anarcho syndicaliste movement survived war II.

to the background. The colonial question as such has little to do with our subject with the exception of *political* colonization mentioned under F of my classification. Socialists and communists alike eagerly accepted, even admired the new center-oriented nationalism in the young independent states.

Confronted with the realities of peripheral movements Marxists have always been obliged to adjust their theories²¹. According to the first concept revolutions of the national bourgeoisie against imperialism, coming first on «the “historical agenda”», had to be supported by all progressive forces. The second one was based on assumption that the national bourgeoisie was too feeble to conduct its “own” revolution and that the proletariat and the “vanguard party” had to play the leading role right from the start. Basically there was little difference between the two concepts: according to both, social forces behind social change are initiated by the center, not by peripheral areas²².

²¹ *Und wird Bakunin den Amerikanern einen ‘Eroberungskrieg’ zum Vorwurf machen, der zwar seiner of die ‘Gerechtigkeit und Menschlichkeit’ gestützten Theorie einen argen Stoss gibt, der aber doch einzig and allein im Interesse der Zivilisation geführt wurde? Oder its es etwa ein Unglück, dass das herrliche Kalifornien den faulen Mexikanern entrissen ist, die nichts damit zu machen wussten? Dass die energischen Yankees durch die rasche Ausbeutung der dortigen Goldminen die Zirkulationsmittel vermehren, an der gelegensten Küste des stillen Meeres in wening Jahren eine dichte Bevölkerung und einen ausgedehnten Handel Konzentrieren, grosse Städte schaffen, Dampfschiffsverbindun, eröffnen, eine Eisenbahn von New York bis San Francisco anlegen, den Stillen Ozean erst eigentlich der Zivilisation eröffnen, und zum dritten Mal in der Geschichte dem Welthandel eine neue Richtung geben werden? Die ‘Unabhängigkeit’ einiger spanischen Kalifornier und Texaner mag darunter leiden, die ‘Gerechtigkeit’ und andre moralische Grundsätze mögen hie und da verletzt sein; aber was gilt das gegen solche weltgeschichtliche Tatsachen?*

Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels *Werke*, Band 5, Berlin, 1961, s. 273–274.

In 1849, writing, about the Slavic people in Eastern Europe, Fr. Engels expressed himself in favour of its complete germanization, denying its national and cultural aspirations as a revival of the situation in the Middle Ages.

In the first great struggle against French colonialism by the Algerians led by Abdel Kader, Engels chose the side of colonial France, with its modernizing influence. See on European center attitudes of Marx and Engels, Kostas Papaionnou “Marx et la politique internationale”, I, TI, III in *Le Contrat social*, Paris, 1967).

A Dutch Marxist was among the very few in Holland who did not take the side of the South African Boers or the ground that British imperialism represented “historical development.”

²² Cited by David Mitrany in *Marx against the peasants. A Study in Social Dogmatism*, London, 1952 (2° impr.), p. 48. 23

The Marxist authors today considered as classics — Rosa Luxemburg, the council communists, A Gramsci, José Carlos Mariátegui, etc. — have always been very unorthodox and even heretic in their times. They all took a strong and positive interest in peripheral and syndicalist facts, which were not at all appreciated by orthodox Marxists. Rosa Luxemburg underwent a strong influence from the Russian revolution of 1905, the idea of the general strike, etc.

Gramsci demands the autonomy of the workers; councils not only from the, trade: unions but also from the revolutionary Socialist Party, even if the councils at first indulge in a ‘natural’ syndicalism and anarchism. Times Literary Supplement, 24 August 1967).

Mariátegui opposed the «decentralization centralists» and pronounced himself in favour of a peripheral conception of “el nuevo regionalismo”:

2. The peripheral view on the forces behind social change: *Anarchism*

The anarchist conceptions of the social forces behind social change are far more general, less outspoken than the Marxist formulae. Unlike Marxism, it does not allot a specific role to the industrial proletariat.

In anarchist writings one comes across all kinds of working people and poor people, all the oppressed, all those who somehow belong to peripheral groups or areas and thereby form potential factors in the revolutionary struggle towards social change.

Besides, anarchism has always showed a vivid interest in the social organization or primitive cultures (mentioned under A of my classification of center-peripheral relations). In his *"Mutual Aid"* Kropotkin devotes one chapter to "Mutual Aid among Savages". Elie Reclus a book entitled: *"Les Primitifs"*²³. Anarchist authors have always been fascinated by the writings of cultural anthropologists. In the Sixties, during the decolonization of Africa, the English monthly *"Anarchy"* published articles com-

Mejor dicho, comienza a bosquejarse, un nuevo regionalismo. Este regionalismo no es una mera protesta contra el régimen centralista. Es una expresión de la conciencia serrana y del sentimiento andino. Los nuevos regionalistas son, ante todo, indigenistas. No se les puede confundir con los anticentralistas de viejo tipo.

José Carlos Mariátegui, *7 Ensayos de interpretación de la realidad peruana*. Ed. Amauta, Lima, 1971, p. 215 (first published 1923).

²³ Since Cuba, the, well-known unorthodox and "activist" Marxists (R. Debray, E. Guevara) have spoken almost exclusively about the exploitative role of American capitalism and multinationals in Latin America, while their modernizing aspect deemed so important by Marx, was neglected. It is a typical case of "irony of history" that this aspect of capitalism should have been emphasized by an anarcho-syndicalist reporter, Augustin Souchy: *Der bescheidene Fortschritt, der trotz alledem erzielt wurde, ist der Banane zu verdanken. (...) Bei den ausländischen Compagnien war die Gesamtheit der Arbeiter organisiert. 1954 unterbreitete die Gewerkschaft der United Fruit Company einen Katalog mit Forderungen, die von der Firma abgelehnt wurden.*

Nach Scheitern der Verhandlungen traten 12 000 Plantagonarbeiter in den Streik. Der mehrere Wochen dauernde Ausstand endete mit dem Sieg der Arbeiter.(...) Die Compagnien hatten bereits vorher, dem allgemeinen Trend der Entwicklung folgend, Volksschulen auf ihre Kosten für die Kinder ihrer Arbeiter errichtet: womit sie dem Staat eine grosse finanzielle Sorge abnahmen. (...)

In Honduras ist der soziale Aufstieg der plantagen-arbeiter energischen Gewerkschaften zu verdanken, die anonym geblieben sind.

Augustin Souchy, *betrifft: Latein Amerika. Zwischen Generälen, campesinos und Revolutionären. 20 Jahre Erfahrungen und Lehren von Augustin Souchy*, S. 59–60, Frankfurt am Main, 1974.

Also see Boris Goldenberg, *The Cuban Revolution and Latin America*, London, 1965, pp. 6667. *The economic domination of foreign companies, their privileges and profits, and their alliance with the local oligarchy and successive dictators were bound to produce strong anti-imperialist feelings among those small sections of the urban; population which were becoming politically conscious. The positive contribution of foreign capital to the development of the country, of course was overlooked. Few people bothered to ask themselves whether the country (Guatemala) would have been developed without the 'imperialists'. No account was taken of the fact that foreign employers paid twice or three times as much as local capitalists. Nor was any attention paid to the fact that the workers of the United Fruit Company had better working conditions, better houses, any schools for their children and that the only hospitals in the country were built and maintained by foreign firms.*

paring the libertarian traits of the authentic indigenous African cultures and the — sometimes — libertarian structures of the tribes with the emerging African nationalist states based on the authoritarianism of colonial rule and the nationalism imported into Africa by traditionally authoritative Europeans²⁴.

The outsiders of society — the marginal groups, young people, Lumpenproletariat, etc. mentioned under C and E of the classification — have always received sympathetic attention in anarchist writings. It is well-known that Bakunin presented the Lumpenproletariat and the *déclassé* intellectuals as revolutionary forces and that he felt great sympathy for the peasants' revolt of Razin and Pugachev. The “mob” is known to play a positive role in anarchist studies on history, such as Kropotkin's history of the French revolution.

In anarchism socio-psychological factors are considered autonomous, not subsidiary to economic factors, and their role is valued judging by the attention given in anarchist writings to the young — youth as such, not proletarians. Kropotkin's “*Appeal to the Young*”, perhaps the most frequently translated and distributed propaganda leaflet of the anarchist movement, is an address to young people of all classes.

The most important argument concerning the forces behind social change was formulated by Bakunin when he criticized Marx' ideas about the revolutionary potential of the industrial proletariat in the centers of capitalism. In his polemics with the Marxists, Bakunin predicted that in the capitalist centers — especially those in Germany and England — the working class would turn away from the socialist revolution and would come to accept bourgeois society, whose attitudes, morals and basic views would ultimately be accepted and taken over. For real revolutionary forces he placed his hopes on the peripheral areas of the capitalist Europe of his time: Italy, Russia and Spain²⁵.

Translated into present-day terms, Bakunin's prediction could be formulated as follows: in the centers of the capitalist system the workers strive after social change within the bourgeois system and try to benefit from the results of economic “growth” and expanding consumption. In the (still) peripheral areas of capitalist society all the

²⁴ Elie Reclus, *Les Primitifs. Etudes d'ethnologie comparée*, Paris, 1885.

²⁵ Jeremy Westall, “Africa and the Future”, in *Anarchy, A Journal of Anarchist Ideas*, nr. 3, May 1961: *One begins to feel that Western man has done the most arrogant of acts in the process of acculturation in Africa: the teachers should have been taught by their “pupils”: (...) it does seem likely that those very things that are so vital to Africa, the things that attract us in the West because of the lack of them in our own society — the throbbing vitality and the deep mystery of experience — will be snuffed out as the African continent becomes dictatorial; totalitarian, and then imperialistic; as it becomes industrialized and westernized.*

*Yet what would an anarchist hope might happen? Why would he encourage an African who holds anarchist views to try to do his country? For myself, I would encourage the preservation of the cultural heritage manifest in the tribe, yet the tribal system itself needs to be infused with a libertarian spirit, in some tribes before the European invasion, there were no chiefs. The Ibo in Nigeria, the Kikuyu of Kenya and the Tonga of Northern Rhodesia are three examples where we have already the basis for a fundamentally decentralist society. I should also emphasize the worthiness of African village life, and the evils of industrialization, even though the rejection of all things Western would be a great mistake. I should encourage a **critical** absorption of those things considered worthwhile and important by **Africans**.*

poor classes, which pay for and are suffering from this capitalist expansion without benefiting from the process of growth, will look toward revolutionary forms of social change.

3. Some realities behind the theories

When looking at the historical movements and organizations in Europe, one cannot fail to note how little congruity there is between practice and theory of the social forces behind social change.

The Marxist parties have never been purely proletarian, nor have they tried to be so. In many countries they found followers and voters among the agrarian population and all kinds of urban people. In Marxist propaganda the word proletariat very soon comes to include all working people.

The orientation of anarchist and anarcho-syndicalist movements in many countries was mainly industrial and urban. In the countryside the people backing anarchist and syndicaliste organizations were wage earners and small peasants. The Lumpenproletariat never played an important role in these organizations and neither did other marginal groups²⁶. Intellectuals and young people were drawn to entirely different movements. The army of semi-permanently unemployed formed the bulk of the communist voters during the last years of the Weimar Republic in Germany. In other countries the unemployed showed a different voting conduct. Fascism found adherents among many peripheral groups. The English working classes always backed the reformist non-Marxist and non-anarchist conceptions of the Labour Party and the trade unions, etc.

None let us have a look at anarchist and Marxist ideas on strategy and at the mentality behind them.

IV. The strategy of revolutionary social change

1. The organization of the struggle

Both anarchists and Marxists have always been aware of the gap between their conceptions about the strategy to be adopted in the struggle towards revolution and social change. It was this difference that was the real cause behind the split in the First

²⁶ For Bakunin's ideas on these matters, see; Archives Bakounine, II, *Michel Bakounine et les Conflicts dans l'Internationale. 1872. La Question Germano-slaves. Le Communisme d'Etat. Ecrits et matériaux*. Textes établis et annotés par A. Lehning, Leiden, 1965 and III. "*Gosudarstvennost i anarkhia*" — Etatisme et anarchie. 1873. Trad. par M. Body. Introduction et Annotation de A. Lehning Leiden, 1967.

About Kropotkin's expectations of a Russian Revolution, see the end of his: *La Grande Révolution Française*, Paris, 1909.

International and it recurs time and again in the polemics between the two schools of socialism.

When we apply the center-peripheral terminology to this antagonism, the Marxists appear to adhere to the center-oriented policy, i.e. they try to create a political center in order to take over and use the existing centers of political power and organization²⁷. The anarchists are periphery-oriented in their outlook they try to create a confederation of basic, self-steering units which are bound by their concepts of the ultimate goal, the struggle against the existing order, future society, strategy and solidarity. All schools of anarchist thought share this conception. Another important characteristic is that the organization of the struggle already contains the germs of the future libertarian society.

The anarchist and syndicaliste struggle: is often referred to as a guerrilla struggle;, where as the European social-democratic and communist parties are compared to regular, disciplined and hierarchic armies, in which party leaders fulfill the roles of officers and ordinary party members and followers those of the soldiers. In this context it is interesting to mention Gerald Brenan's observation on the role played by the Spanish guerrilla in the fight against Napoleon's armies. The guerrilla by itself could not defeat Napoleon and neither could Wellington's armies; it was only through the combined efforts of Spanish guerrillas and the English army that the French army could be derouted²⁸.

Vis-à-vis the Marxist conception advocating the use of the tools and forms of political organization created by the bourgeoisie party, state, the anarchists have argued that the only result would be that socialism was to become dominated and victimized by such tools rather than emancipated. They have prophesied that a new ruling class would arise which, in its turn, would reign through coercion and that, ultimately, there would hardly be any difference between Marxist and bourgeois oppression.

To anarchists it did not come as a surprise that, once in power, Marxists and other leftist parties resorted to the same basic philosophy on social change and progress that is encountered among defenders of liberalism and free enterprise. Once in power these revolutionaries preach that social change and progress can only be realized by order and through the new centers of power, the party, the state and its official channels. And never through other than these official channels!

Just as the defenders of capitalist society, they deny the existence of any fundamental antagonism between centers and peripheral areas; peripheral areas should be developed by the center through imitation of the center's mode! The result has been that the exploitation and slaughter of peripheral groups such as the peasants, which

²⁷ See Notes 12, 14 and 17.

²⁸ An exception is formed by the council communists (H. Gorter, A. Pannekoek, etc.), in whose conception the organization of the struggle is based on the direct democracy of the councils. Their theoretical analysis however is dominated entirely by Marx' idea of the proletariat's unique role in the struggle and his negation of revolutionary potential in other peripheral groups.

did not fit in with the center's development model, have rarely been as cruel as in socialist Russia.

New center systems like the ones in Russia and Eastern Europe will react in the same fashion and by the same mechanism as the older systems did when confronted with a revolutionary social change initiated by peripheral groups in their societies] maintenance of law and order, oppression, slander. In their historical writings revolutions and bloody revolts — like the ones that took place after Stalin's death — are reduced to “events” or “warnings”-, mentioned in footnotes. The sometimes revolutionary reorganization of the, structure of political, social and economic life during these “events” is completely ignored. A comparative study of, say, the Paris Commune as recorded in bourgeois history and the Hungarian revolution of 1956 as recorded in communist history — and of the language used by the respective historians — should reveal interesting similarities.

Bourgeois and Marxist historians tend to adopt the same frame of references towards the history of anarchism, anarchist movements and revolutionary struggles, except that bourgeois historians are slightly more liberal in their attitudes. The fate of the social revolution during the Spanish Civil War is symptomatic it was not until very recently that “liberal” historians mentioned the revolution, a subject which until then had been practically neglected in the extensive literature on the war. Party-communist historians continue their slander on the subject²⁹.

Besides the disagreement between anarchist and political socialists about the strategy to be followed, there is also a difference in opinion about the nature of the battle field. To anarchists the battlefield is society as such they have even refused to limit them-selves to the socioeconomic sector alone. Anarchists have been activists in all kinds of movements trying to liberate existing society from authoritarian structures. women's liberation, anti-militarism, anti-colonialism; free thought, free education and modern schools”, prison reform, human rights, etc., in several countries the major anarchist activities displayed in these fields had the, form of a guerrilla” against all facets of society³⁰. In the Marxist movements politics always came first. Marxists have often checked emancipatory struggles considered subordinate to the “Larger” interest of the party. They were often opposed to the independence of such movements fighting for a specific cause.

²⁹ Brennan, op. cit., p. 188 fn.: *The French were driven out of Spain by the continual wearing action of the guerrilla bands (which like the Anarchist forces of to-day, were a spontaneous expression of the revolutionary feeling of the people) acting in combination with a small but highly disciplined force. Neither of these would have sufficed alone. In the same way the Anarchists and Socialists might together, under favourable circumstances, have brought off a successful revolution. But in fact no such combination of the two working class forces in Spain was ever practicable. It took nothing less than Franco's rising to bring it about.*

³⁰ On the similarities between the “liberal” and the communist approaches to the Spanish Civil War and Social Revolution see: Noam Chomsky, “Objectivity and Liberal Scholarship” in: *American Power and the Mandarins*, Penguin Books, Middlesex, 1969.

“Society, not politics” is the anarchist credo, but what happens if “law and order” politics are substitutes: by a policy of regulation. Society and politics are then no longer separate issues. When and where this has happened, anarchism has therefore lost credibility.

2. Mentality any values

Behind the theoretical differences between anarchist and Marxist schools of thought there are differences in mentality and values. In anarchism human values play an important part: justice freedoms, liberation, human dignity, the moral value of individual sacrifices, are considered autonomous, of all times. In Marxist eyes these values are always related to a specific socio-economic order. This is the reason why they reproach the anarchists of absolutism and of lack of historical realism, Fundamental in Marxism is the conception of the “historical process”, which claims that this process and the forces behind it may be explained scientifically. Expressions like “historical necessity”, “inevitable developments”, “history has proved”, etc., frequently recur in Marxist language. The Marxist faith in a “historical process” is as absolutistic as the anarchist faith in universal human values. It is rather obvious that these different conceptions should be reflected in different ideas on progress.

The achievements of Free Enterprise economy — the big and efficient economic and political corporation of the center have not only been recognized by Marxists as necessities, they have also been approved of and even admired as the results of human progress. Marxists and capitalists share the same frame of reference towards progress and social change, the same idea, our way is the only one open to mankind — which reflects a certain “arrogance of progress”. One even comes across this “capitalist” frame of reference towards progress among Marxists pretending to have liberated themselves from all dogmatism. A good example is the book “*Socialism in Cuba*” by Paul M. Sweezy and Leo Huberman, the editors of *The Monthly Review*³¹. The first chapter of Socialism in Cuba is called “The Need for Socialism”, it opens with statements about what has to be done by any Latin American nation aiming, at development. These statements have been taken from... President Kennedy “s message proposing the Alliance for Progress and from an article of Senator Mike Mans field³².

Huberman and Sweezy give the following commentary on Kennedy and Mansfield:

³¹ In the Netherlands the main organization of the anarchist movement — apart from the revolutionary syndicaliste organization — was the anti-militarist organization (IAMV).

In the United States, Emma Goldman’s activities were mainly concentrated on human right, free speech, freedom to propagate sexual reform, etc. Also see note 18. And Leo Huberman and Paul Sweezy *Socialism in Cuba*, New York, London, 1969.

³² *Ib.*; pp. 19–20 *In the New York Times Magazine of Sunday, December 4, 4; 1960, Senator Mike Mansfield addressed himself to “The basic Problem of Latin America”. Here is what he proposed must be done by any Latin American nation that wished to develop.*

1) *It must act, at once, to alleviate the most glaring inadequacies in diet, housing and health from which tens of millions of people suffer.*

“Now, the interesting thing about this excellent prescription for curing the ills of the Latin American countries is that it was an age-old remedy prescribed by equally competent doctors years ago.(...) But the medicine was never swallowed — until the revolutionary government of Cuba came to power. Now, at long last, the things that needed doing, the measures for making Cuba a healthy instead of a sick nation; have been taken what Senator Mansfield, and the Foreign Policy Association, and the World Bank, and the Department of Commerce, and ‘President Kennedy said had to be done is being done — in socialist Cuba’³³.

To me, the interesting point is that the two Marxists agree completely with the spokesmen of modern capitalism about the medicine, about the way towards progress and social change. The only difference is that socialism does the job and that capitalism cannot do it. This attitude is not surprising when we look at Huberman and Sweezy’s definition of a socialist revolution.

“...that is to say, where the state power of the bourgeoisie and its domestic and foreign allies has been overthrown; a new government and army representing the interests of the exploited classes have been established, and all or most of the means of production have been transferred from the private to the public sector³⁴.”

This definition has nothing in common with my definition of anarchism, nor with the idea of preserving the identity of peripheral areas and their inhabitants. To anarchists socialism and progress mean liberation of the existing society, freedom for *present-day* man. For Marxists the emphasis is on *future* society. I think one of the reasons why anarchism and prepolitical movements have often been marked utopian is attributable to this belief in a new society on the other side of the hill: The “utopias” of Andalusian anarchists, the Zapatistas, etc. have in fact been very realistic. The only thing is that intellectual observers often tend to forget that the poor people’s heaven is a very modest one.

2) *It must improve agriculture by diversifying; crops, broadening land ownership, expanding cultivable acreage and introducing modern agricultural. Techniques on a wide scale in order to increase production, particularly of food.*

3) *It must bring about the establishment of a steadily expanding rang: of industries.*

4) *It must wipe out illiteracy within a few years and provide adequate facilities to educate an ever-increasing number of highly trained technicians, specialists, and professionals to provide the whole range of modern services.*

5) *It must end the relative isolation of the beach-heads from the, interiors, and the parts of the interior from one, another, by a vast enlargement of existing systems of transportation and communications.*

³³ *Ib.*, p. 20.

³⁴ *Ib.*, p. 9.

V. The realities of revolutionary change

1. Peripheral revolutions...

When comparing the expectations about social change fostered by liberal capitalists, Marxists and anarchists with the situation as it is today, no one has reason to congratulate anybody.

Free enterprise did change the world but to the large majority of the world's population it hardly seems a change for the better in the sense that it has brought a greater degree of wellbeing, greater freedom or human dignity.

Socialist revolutions in the centers of industrial capitalism, such as Marx had predicted, never took place. Instead, in every capitalist country passing from the peripheral to the center staged industrial workers became integrated in capitalist societies and their once revolutionary parties and trade unions turned reformist.

The anarchist efforts to incite a social revolution that was to liberate society from the state and from authority have been unsuccessful and the syndicalist idea of the general strike has proved a failure. The most far-reaching socialist revolution and the one most strongly influenced by anarchist ideas, i.e. the Spanish revolution, ended with Franco's victory, in the Mexican revolution the Zapata movement, with its interesting peripheral and anarchist features, died away after the victory of Carranza and the murder of Zapata. Other revolutions in this century have ended with authoritarian and totalitarian regimes, enforcing -a powerful state control and domination of the country's economy. This is usually called socialism... except by anarchists.

However, the anarchists' sociological conception of revolution, especially Bakunin's prediction of coming revolutions in the peripheral areas of capitalism, has turned out to be much more realistic than the outcome of Marx' studies. The major social revolutions and upheavals of our century took place in Russia (1905 and 1917), Mexico, China, Spain, Vietnam, Algeria, Cuba and other areas peripheral to the capitalist center.

Inside these peripheral countries it were the social groups peripheral to capitalism, especially the peasants and other groups mentioned: sub B of the classification that played a revolutionary role-. Their resistance was a result of the fact that they had suffered strong pressure from and were threatened in their existence by the central forces of capitalist modernization.

The center of Zapata's revolution was Morelos, which at that time was the scene of a strong, capitalist-oriented expansion of the sugar estates. But it were not the sugar estate workers — of the capitalist sector — who revolted, it was the Indian population of the old communities, whose existence was threatened by capitalist expropriation of its land and violation of its rights,, that became the social force behind: the Zapata movement. While these Zapatistas were merely defending their legal rights, they were attacked by *all* center-oriented forces, conservative and liberal, "revolutionary" and counter-revolutionary, by Diaz and Huerta, by Madero and Carranza. Other peasant movements underwent the same fate. The cultural anthropologist Gerrit Huizer, who

for many years lived in peasant communities in Latin America, mentions the following factors which he considers crucial for the formation of large peasant organizations:

1. Contact with modernizing forces, which to the majority of the peasants has brought frustration rather than improvement of their condition and has left them at the margin of the benefits of development.
2. The peasants' awareness of their basic interests and grievances and of the possibility that united action can be undertaken to defend these interests.
3. Availability of strong; or charismatic local leaders.
4. Support from educated urban allies³⁵.

These factors equally apply to the anarchist movement in Andalusia, the anarchist Makhno-movement and to revolutionary syndicalism³⁶.

They would likewise seem to apply to the great revolutions in Asia and Africa. In Vietnam provincial and traditional Hanoi was the revolutionary capital, as opposed to Saigon, where capitalist modernization and commercialization had led to proletarianization of the plantation workers. The peripheral triumphs in China and Algeria are well known.

It is not only the social forces behind these revolutions that are anarchist, it is above all their face' which is so typically anarchist.; the creation of many self-steering, self-controlling and periphery-oriented forms of social organization, like the soviets in Russia, the collectivizations in Spain, direct democracy in the villages of Morelos, autogestion in Algeria, autonomy in Vietnamese villages; etc. In revolutionary struggles guerrilla activities often played an important, even decisive role.

In all these different revolutions we encounter the "creation of something new in the process of counteraction". The newly emerging structures of direct democracy present

³⁵ See Gerrit Huizer. *The Revolutionary Potential of Peasants in Latin America*, Lexington, 1972, Chapter 6, and, by the same author, *Peasant Rebellion in Latin America*, Penguin Books; 1963, pp. 103-104.

³⁶ "Strong land Charismatic leaders" is in seeming contradiction with anarchist principles. The contradiction is not real because there is never any question of an unconditional leadership. Womack (op. cit., p. 79) writes as follows about Zapata's leadership: *The contest for revolutionary command in Morelos, was therefore not a fight. It was a process of recognition by various neighborhood chiefs that there was only one man in the state they all respected enough to cooperate with, and that they had a duty to bring. Their followers under his authority. (...) But his elevation to leadership was not automatic and never definitive. As he himself later wrote to Alfredo Robles Dominguez. He had to very careful with his men: for they followed him, he said, not because they were ordered to but because they felt **cariño* for him — that is, they liked him, admired him, held him in high but tender regard, and were devoted to him. It was because he was the kind of man who could arouse other eminently pragmatic men in this way that neither Tepepa, nor Merino, nor anyone else who cared about the movement ever tried to rival him. If he never crossed them, they never crossed him". The same description would be applicable to men like Nestor Makhno; B. Durruti and to the leaders of revolutionary syndicalism.*

an alternative and a challenge to the “normal” — i.e. center oriented — conceptions of progress held by the bourgeoisie and the Marxists.

2... conquered by Marxists and Centrists

If the anarchists’ approach to revolutions in peripheral areas is so much more realistic than the Marxist one, the question may well be asked why, in spite of this, so many communist parties have been so successful in gaining power during revolutions.

My first remark in this connection is that only Marxist *heretics* — in an “agonizing reappraisal” of many of the existing Marxist conceits — succeeded in doing so. Marx himself reappraised his ideas following the confrontation with the realities of the Paris Commune. His *The Civil War in France* is often cited by libertarian Marxists.

Lenin provides the most striking example of such an adjustment. Between the: First and Second Russian revolutions (February-October 1917) his analysis of the situation and the conclusions he drew from it were in complete contradiction with the policy and theory until then adhered to by his party and himself. Famous r remains the exclamation by an orthodox Marxist eyewitness in reaction to the “April Theses”, formulated by Lenin to his astonishes’ followers on the day after his arrival in revolutionary Petrograd: “*Lenin has now made himself self a candidate for one European throne that has been vacant for thirty years — the throne of Bakunin ! Lenin’s new words echo something old — the superannuated truths of primitive anarchism*”³⁷. *State and Revolution* is another result of this new heretic and “anarchist” position adopted by Lenin. However, once in power the practice of Lenin or the Bolsheviks had nothing to do with the theory of *State and Revolution*.

The Chinese and Vietnamese communists organized the struggle on a peripheral basis. Their policies had very little in common with the analyses and views of the Moscow center. Mao Tse Tung’s writings on the revolutionary struggle even contain remarks on social bandits and riff-raff reminiscent of Bakunin’s s ideas³⁸.

In Fanon’s classic book on the Algerian and other anti-colonial revolutions *Les Damnés de la Terre*, which is based on the realities of struggle the author’s attention is centered entirely on peripheral areas and peripheral people.

³⁷ L.P. Goldenberg, cited by Paul Avrich, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

³⁸ See, for instance, Stuart Scram, *Mao Tse-tung*, Penguin Books, pp. 121–123: *The notion that rural vagabonds can be transformed by suitable training into the vanguard of the proletariat is a striking reflection of that extreme voluntarism which has culminated in the idea that “the subjective creates the objective”. (...) From childhood he had admired the bandit heroes of the popular Chinese novels, and though his vision of the world was no longer circumscribed by the horizon of the peasant rebel, neither did his Marxist convictions lead him to repudiate the enthusiasms of his youth. His articles written in 1926 on the classes of Chinese society had offered striking confirmation of this. In them, Mao had given a colourful description of the five categories which constituted the é*léments déclassés — soldiers, bandits, robbers, beggars, and prostitutes — and praised their capacity as revolutionary fighters, with none of the reservations he has seen fit to insert in the current orthodox edition of his works.**

A second remark is that in historical reality a periphery-oriented struggle, which may have important emancipatory successes, occurs *alongside with* a new center-oriented power structure; with its party, army and state. In the struggle against the old order, the two forces join and become strongly united. Once the victory over the old enemies — foreign colonialists, national oppressors, or both has been won, the new center systems restore center-peripheral relations. This is in complete agreement with Marxist, nationalist and leftist conceptions that social change has to be steered from the center. The center subsequently destroys the: new peripheral structures and self controlling bodies that have emerged as a result of the struggle against the old order. The fates of the Russian Soviets, of the Algerian autogestion are good examples of such a development³⁹.

A third remark is that social revolutions in our century are invariably attended with warfare and other forms of organized violence. Although the 19 century socialists had not anticipated revolutions without violence, they did believe that any such violence would be chiefly spontaneous in character and would merely be a question of days, perhaps hours. After all, this had been the case: in 1830, 1848 and in the days of the proclamation of the Paris Commune.

Many anarchist thinkers were none too optimistic about the results of revolutions born out of war and dictatorship⁴⁰. The terrible violence over prolonged periods of

³⁹ The Kronstadt revolt of 1921, during which all power was claimed for the soviets, not for the parties, and when the destruction was demanded of the bureaucratic “commissar-state”, to anarchists remains the final act of the Russian Revolution. Since the Russian Revolution has been lost and dead “... *something has died within me*”, wrote Alexander Berkman, March 7, 1921, in his diary; see Alexander Berkman, *The Bolshevik Myth (Diary 1920–1922)*, New York, 1925, p. 303.

⁴⁰ Many anarchists — Max Nettlau, Rudolf Rocker and others had no great confidence in revolutions born in times of war and violence. In anarchist writing the spirit of 1789 has often been compared with the one prevailing in 1793; in the former case it was really libertarian and open-minded, in the latter it was not, in the third volume of his memoirs, Rocker reports on his conversations, in 1918, with F. Domela Nieuwenhuis. (Rudolf Rocker; *Revolución y Represión (1913–1951)*, Buenos Aires, s. a., pp. 12–13): *Lo que más deprimía al anciano eran las repercusiones espirituales que debía tener la guerra como secuela. Era de opinión que todas las experiencias de la guerra tienen que fortalecer en los individuos la convicción de que las alteraciones sociales básicas sólo pueden ser alcanzadas por la fuerza bruta. Pero ese pensamiento, como creía él, debía encontrar también un eco después de la guerra en las vastas capas del movimiento socialista. También era de opinión que después de la catástrofe había que contar en muchos países con grandes levantamientos y tal vez con revoluciones efectivas. Sin embargo temía que tales insurrecciones, bajo la influencia de la espantosa miseria de las masas y la hipnosis de la violencia que dejaría la guerra, podrían ser dirigidas fácilmente por caminos que prepararían el terreno a una nueva reacción, como se evidenciaba ya claramente en Rusia, donde la dictadura del bolchevismo se disponía a suprimir todas las otras tendencias socialistas con el pretexto de que eso era necesario para la defensa de la revolución.*”

Also see Womack, op. cit., pp. 224–225.

The Liberating Army of the Center and South was a “people’s army”, And to the men who fought in its ranks, and to the women who accompanied them as private quartermistresses, being “people” counted more than being an “army”. For leadership they still looked more readily to their village chiefs than to their revolutionary army officers. At first, during the early years of the guerrillas, they had suffered no

time, which is characteristic of the revolutionary struggles of the 20th century, has invariably strengthened the position of the newly emerging center. Today revolution and violence seem to have become inseparable.

A noteworthy phenomenon is that revolution violence in the peripheral areas may assume an anarchist form the guerrilla. Although whole libraries have been written about guerrilla in the last decade, I believe it might be useful to say something about guerrilla in connection with center-peripheral relations.

3. Guerrilla

The Spanish word guerrilla means “small war”, but is often translated as “people’s war”. Guerrilla combines both these aspects in it. A good definition of “people’s war” guerrilla — is overall small-scale warfare, conducted by the whole population, or large sections of it, whereby the participating people as far as possible continue their daily lives and work. This guerrilla — in my eyes the *real* one -, is completely periphery-oriented and uses all the — elements specific of the re-ion. Its aim is thus to destroy the center’s grip on the peripheral areas by the elimination of all kinds of power relations (political, economical and. social) that have hitherto bound the region to the center. The destruction of the center-peripheral relation goes hand in hand with the emergence of an equalitarian society based on the areas identity. It is created by the area’s inhabitants who have taken their fates into their own hands. My conception of a “real” guerrilla implies that the professional “guerrillero, who has stopped living his ordinary life, does not belong to it. The Chinese Red Army on their Long March in the Thirties, Fidel Castro’s columns in the Sierra Maestra, Che Guevara’s Bolivian group; they did not belong to the real guerrilla . They represent the nucleus of a new array, the *focus* — to use a word frequently used in the Sixties of a new normal power-oriented array structure⁴¹. They all played the same role as Wellington’s armies did in the Peninsular War. However, the boundaries between professional and real guerrillas are not very clear, the bonds between them very strong. The focus lives under nearly

tension in their allegiance, because village chiefs and revolutionary officers were commonly the same persons, or close relatives, or old friends. But in the big campaigns against Huerta, as the skeleton of a regular army formed, amateur warriors had started to become professionals, and commanders had fewer personal connections with local civilian leaders. Although village councils normally cooperated with the army, ordinary soldiers had more and more divided, or at least different, loyalties. The war did not go on long enough, however, for the Liberating Army’s militarist tendencies to harden.

Though violence and violent action have been well-known traditional phenomena of anarchism, it has never assumed the form of large-scale military violence. Gandhi’s non-violent strategy — inspired by the anarchist thinkers H.D. Thoreau and L.N. Tolstoi — influenced intellectual anarchists, especially in Holland. However, the majority of anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists did not see how non-violent action could be realized in their countries. With the beginning of the New Left, non-violent direct action became popular.

⁴¹ It is interesting to see that in the extensive literature on the Latin American “guerrilla”, the role of the “real” people’s guerrilla in the history of Latin America — Zapata, Toussaint l’Ouverture — is hardly ever mentioned. The work of cultural anthropologists shows the opposite tendency.

the same circumstances and in the same area as the people; their contacts in the joint struggle against the common enemy are close and harmonious. Brennan's observation about the necessity of joint action by army and guerrilla has proved correct for this type of struggle. Great victories have been the result.

The subsequent reshaping of society, however, is a different matter altogether.

It is remarkable that regimes that rose to power after guerrilla warfare — in China, Vietnam, Yugoslavia, Cuba, Guinea-Bissau — allow much more room in their conceptions of social change for periphery-oriented developments, in any case as long as the recollection of the guerrilla struggle, remains vivid (43). They make the attempt to avoid the Russian example of complete domination by and modeling after the center. Such regimes and ideologies often show signs of heavy internal tension just like the hearts and minds of the new men in power, the former guerrilla leaders. Such tensions reflect two contradictory tendencies authoritarian guidance of the peripheral areas or their autonomy. The harmony between these tendencies that used to exist in the guerrilla days has turned into conflict. The tension is illustrated by the sudden changes in the Chinese social policy, the Great Leap Forward, the Hundred-Flower period, the Cultural Revolution. The Cuban preoccupation to preserve the Sierra Maestra mentality is another example. In the long run domination by the center can be counteracted only by truly autonomous, i.e. revolutionary movements operating from outside the center.

VI. Conclusions

A lot has already been written about the fate of prepolitical movements in peripheral areas. The people involved made great sacrifices in the course of the many heroic battles they fought, battles that have changed the face of the earth. Yet, the prepolitical ideals as defined by the *Makhnovtsy* — “take our fate in our own hands and conduct our own lives according to our own will and our own conceptions of truth” — have never been realized so far. The only thing that has changed is the attitude towards these movements in the world's centers. The “arrogance of progress” of the center *vis-à-vis* peripheral areas, of political parties *vis-à-vis* “prepolitical” forms of organization is not broken, but it is shaken. There is a growing awareness — at least among social scientists — that for outsiders coming from the urban centers there is as much to learn in peripheral areas as there is to teach. Social change should preserve and make use of the peripheral area's identity. Social change destroying this identity has produced and will always produce disastrous effects for the people inhabiting such areas.

To the peripheral areas and movements the center will continue to be important. Their main problem has been and continues to be: how to meet with the difficulties arising from the fact that the center system always has a much larger — even world — scale. Center-oriented people have a common background and identity, peripheral

movements always have different backgrounds, specific identities they have to *build up* a framework of their own in which to work together.

People of urban backgrounds have always fulfilled an important role in peripheral movements, especially as spokesmen on behalf of the movements, as writers of ideologies and practical programmes and as teachers. I mention the position of Palafox and Díaz Soto y Gama in the Zapata movement and the role played by Arshinov and Volin in the Makhno movement. The anarchist ideology — the creation of urban intellectuals outside of Spain — has furnished the Spanish movement with a set of ideas and an organizational framework enabling them to find — through error and trial — ways and means to deal with problems of scale.

A condition for this kind of help by the center has always been modesty, i.e. a complete lack of superiority feelings *vis-à-vis* the peripheral movements. The key to anarchist success has been that anarchism did not distinguish between centers and peripheral areas, between vanguards and masses. Internal struggle inside the center against arrogance of power and progress and against authoritarian structures will no doubt promote the emancipation of peripheral areas.

In the Sixties the old center — the North Atlantic societies — became; the scene of new “prepolitical movements” emerging inside the existing society: the New Left with its counterculture. This movement has developed forms of struggle: and organization, a mentality and attitudes that are reminiscent of the prepolitical movements and, sometimes; of anarchism. I’m inclined to call the movement post political. Although it has given anarchism new impetus, it differs in many respects from the old anarchist and prepolitical movements.

The people behind the New Left belong mainly to the category mentioned under E of my classification. The movement was born *inside* the center. It has created a peripheral “area” — the counterculture — through a deliberate choice by individuals who preferred to “drop out” of the affluent society. They did not *defend* their identity, their rights to conduct their own lives, they *created* a new identity, new ways of living and in doing so they *attacked* the center values of the existing society⁴².

The new “peripheral” people can meet the center as a basis of greater equality than the old peripheral areas could. They have a much better knowledge and understanding of the center⁴³. But they can also easily fall back to a center position because they lack

⁴² In his essay “What is Castroism?” Th. Draper states that Castro’s program before 1959 fitted well *within the framework of traditional Cuban left-wing politics. (...) That made Castroism distinctive was something else. For the most part, Castro’s road to Power was based on tactics not on ideas. And his tactics were by Cuban standards, — at least partially different.* Th. Draper, *Castroism, Theory and Practice*, New York, 1965, p. 6, pp. 21–22.

Even if this was the only difference, it was a very important one; his “tactics” fundamentally affected Castro’s view on the relation between urban and rural Cuba and his conception of social change.

⁴³ Typical words of the Sixties — “creativity”, “imagination”, “alternatives”, “counter-culture” — are an indication of the difference with the old movements, which were not looking for a new identity and had not used these expressions. In the older movement “defense”, played an important part.

the coherence and resistance characteristic of the old movements. Thus, the libertarian wave in the Sixties, a guerrilla directed against the existing order and culture, had already lost much of its force and its anti-authoritarian content by the beginning of the Seventies⁴⁴. But then libertarian movements have always known big ups and downs. Nowadays the ideas behind the anarchist conception — taking one's fate into one's own hands, self-steering small units — are no longer considered typical of "prepolitical movements in peripheral areas". They are typical of modern society and are relevant to the major problems of our time.

⁴⁴ Michael Lerner, Anarchism and the American Counter-Culture, in *Anarchism Today*, *op.cit.*, p. 59: *My final observation, then, is that — even if technological society does not require a turn to anarchism is the only alternative to annihilation or poisoning — technological society may, with its demands for highly developed workers, help to create men who need (as well as are capable of) interpersonal and ethical relationships of a different sort.*

The argument is both metaphysical and tendentious; but it is not at all impossible that technology will again — as it seems to have done in the past — participate in changing the life, cycles of men who then bend technology to their new needs and capacities. If the counter-culture is at all prophetic of the way needs and capacities will change, the anarchist model and anarchist values may have more to do with the shape of the future society than we have expected.

About the changes in the social composition of libertarian movements; see *Société et ContreSociété chez les Anarchistes et les Anti-Autoritaires*, Communauté de Travail du CIRA, Genève, 1974.

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