

Original

The Relation of Anarchism to Organization

A Paper read before
The Franklin Club, Cleveland, Ohio,
Sunday, September 18, 1898

By FRED SCHULDER.

Cleveland, Ohio
Published at 214 Seneca Street, by Horace E. Carr
1899

NOTE.

The brief explanation of evolution, and also the history of organized government, given in this paper, I have condensed from Herbert Spencer's "First Principles."

That this paper is published in pamphlet form is due mainly to the efforts of my friend, Horace E. Carr. I am also indebted to him for the first dawn of light, showing that the solution of our social and economic problems is to be found in liberty.

Since I understand and endorse these ideas, I claim them as my own, in exactly the same sense that we can claim any idea as our own.

That this pamphlet may stimulate earnest truth-seeking is my desire.

FRED SCHULDER.

THE RELATION OF ANARCHISM TO ORGANIZATION.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:

The subject which I have chosen for discussion this afternoon is the relation of anarchism to organization.

In order that this discussion shall be profitable, it is necessary that we form a clear idea of the meaning of the important terms which will be used in it.

Organization has been defined as the taking on of organic structure—the formation or development of organs.

Now an organ is a part capable of performing some special function which is essential to the life of the whole. Sociologically, then, organization is a combination of individuals, and an arrangement or constitution of this combination into parts, each having a special function which is essential to the life of the combination.

The words organization and evolution have about the same meaning, except that evolution is a more general term. Evolution is a series of changes, under natural law, from a diffused, uniform and indefinite arrangement, to a concentrated, multiform and definite arrangement. Evolution is necessitated first, by the instability of the homogeneous; any finite homogeneous aggregate must inevitably lose its homogeneity through the unequal exposure of its parts to incident forces. This change from homogeneity to heterogeneity is much facilitated by the multiplication

4 THE RELATION OF ANARCHISM TO ORGANIZATION.

of effects. Every differentiated part becomes a parent of further differentiations, since, in growing unlike other parts, it becomes a center of unlike reactions on incident forces, and by so adding to the diversity of forces at work, adds to the diversity of effects produced. Lastly the increasingly distinct demarcation of parts which accompanies the production of differences among parts, is caused by the segregation of mixed units under the action of forces capable of moving them; a force acting on unlike units will tend to separate the dissimilar units from one another, and unite them with units that are similar. Applying to this the law of the survival of the fittest — that only those forms or combinations can survive and persist which have a certain adaptation to their surroundings — we can clearly see that the function of each differentiated part must necessarily be such as will be essential to the life of the evolving combination; for wherever there is a lack of this adaptation, this movement (evolution) is equaled and finally overcome by outside antagonistic forces, and the opposite movement (dissolution) sets in.

I have here given a brief outline of the causes and the direction of evolution, to show, not merely the importance, but the necessity of organization; for it will be seen that organization proceeds according to the same inevitable laws, and that it constitutes the evolution, not only of all living beings, but also of all communities, societies, and society in general. We have here the transformation from the diffused to the concentrated, from the uniform to the multi-form, and from the indefinite to the definite arrangement.

Organization is the law of life — of development. It is true that in union there is strength, but in organization there is still more strength.

Now, what is the relation of anarchism as a social theory, to social organization? If it can be proved that the relation is that of opposition, then anarchism, by opposing organization, or evolution, would favor disorganization and dissolution. It would stand convicted of being unprogressive—unscientific. Anarchism, instead of being a theory of social development and life, would be a theory of social destruction and death.

But let us see. Anarchism may be defined as the doctrine that the liberty of every individual shall be limited, and limited only, by the equal liberty of every other individual. It may be objected that the word anarchism is often used in the sense of "confusion," or "without guiding principle." To these objectors I answer, that when we wish to pass judgment upon any theory, we must first learn to understand the terms as defined by the expounders of that theory; since, otherwise, we are not judging of the theory itself, but merely of the correct or incorrect use of words. Anarchism, then, according to the definition given, opposes organization *if* organization is a denial of equal liberty. But if organization is furthered by the agreement of equal liberty, then anarchism furthers organization. Or if organization is not a denial of, nor furthered by equal liberty, the relation of anarchism to organization is neutral.

We can find nothing in organization itself, which is a denial of equal liberty. Men may, and where they find it advantageous, in fact *do* combine and organize, without being forced to do so by another man, through threat, or act of physical violence directly, or indirectly, by the way of robbery. And such organization will persist under liberty, so long as the individuals composing it find it to their advantage. Society at large is such an organization;

no student of sociology can fail to recognize the development from a diffused, uniform and indefinite arrangement to a concentrated, multiform and definite arrangement. The organization may be said to be in its incipient stage, but the development is going on as fast as antagonistic forces will permit.

Within this social organism there are numerous smaller organisms, some of which are: the industrial organism—the organic arrangement for the production and transportation of wealth; the church; organized societies for scientific research; societies for discussing questions of interest to the members (as this club for instance); and I could go on enumerating for some time. All the above named organisms are organized societies, are voluntary, that is to say, are anarchistic in their formation. So it will be clear that anarchism is not opposed to organization.

“But,” it will be asked, “is not the state an organism?” I answer, “Yes.” “And is not anarchism opposed to the state?” Again, emphatically, “Yes.” “Then does it not logically follow that anarchism is opposed to organization?”

Let me point out the well-known law in logic, that the truth of the particular does not imply the truth of the universal; the fact that anarchism is opposed to the state, which is an organization, does *not* imply that anarchism is opposed to all organization—to the principle of organization itself.

The theory of anarchism has a destructive, as well as a constructive side. It, being the doctrine of equal liberty, it is necessarily opposed to all that destroys this equal liberty, classing all such destructive agencies under the general term “government.” This word has been defined by anarchists as *invasion of the non-invasive individual's liberty*.

In this sense, I must insist that the word be used in this discussion, for in this sense I shall use it: and if, in criticising my statements, you use the word in a different sense, you are not criticising the thought expressed by me, but only a thing of your own manufacture.

It may be claimed, however, that government, even in this sense, is but imperfectly defined until we know what *does*, and what does *not*, constitute invasion of equal liberty in every imaginable case. I concede that a difficulty exists here—that the line cannot be quite definitely drawn. But pray, have those who thus object, a remedy to offer? Have their courts of justice (?) ever discovered the true line? Have they ever discovered what, as an argument against a social theory, is claimed to be undiscoverable? Or, have they not, on the contrary, perpetrated invasions of equal liberty so gross that even the dullest mind must perceive it and cry out in disgust? Under liberty, however, this difficulty will continue to grow less; men will evermore realize their mutual dependence, and this must increase with the development of the social organism. And realizing this mutual dependence, they will adjust these minor differences according to their intelligence—*an adjustment which government often prevents*.

Now let us get back to the main point: anarchism is necessarily opposed to all government; the state is essentially governmental (that is to say, invasive), not only in its reaction on other organisms, but also in the forming of its own organization; it invades the liberty of its own members. What the anarchist objects to in the state is not the element of organization but the element of government.

Take the element of government out of the state, and no anarchist will object to the remains.

Since organization vastly increases the strength and efficiency of that which is organized, the anarchist sees in organized government — that is, organized invasion — the most effective and the most dangerous kind of invasion.

The doctrine of equal liberty necessarily implying the unconditional self-ownership of the individual, it logically follows that it implies, also, the ownership of his product.

The taking of the producer's product without his consent is described by the anarchist as robbery. Hence anarchism is opposed to robbery — to *all* robbery. And again it finds

in organized robbery the most effective form. Through the instrumentality of the state some individuals acquire a monopoly of opportunities, some of which are absolutely necessary to the production of wealth, and others very help-

ful to it. Such opportunities are freedom to the use of land, the freedom of trade, the freedom to use any medium of exchange which will be accepted, the freedom to invent or to copy, etc.,—monopolies which are unthinkable in the absence of government, *and which enable their holders to exact from the producer, as a tribute for allowing him to utilize whatever is so monopolized, such a portion of his product as is equaled by the benefits derived from this utilization.*

Now, since the monopolization of natural opportunities is based on invasion of equal freedom — on government,—its necessary economic result, the exaction of this tribute, (which, I believe I am safe in saying, constitutes the greater part of the whole product) is also based on government.

Such is the fruit of organized robbery. And again, anarchism is opposed, not to the organization, but to the robbery. Although, of course, without the robbery, the organization would be without purpose in *this* instance, and consequently would not exist.

Having seen that anarchism is not opposed to organization itself, let us now go a little further and see if it does not in some cases indirectly further organization, by opposing that which tends to prevent or retard this organization. Since organization, as we have seen, is the life-principle of all aggregation or association, it is obvious that it would take place naturally wherever the individuals composing an association found it mutually advantageous. And it would take place as rapidly as they found it to be to their mutual advantage, provided this organization were not opposed by other forces. All such opposition must necessarily be in the nature of invasion of liberty; such opposition must be government. Anarchism then, by opposing government, would indirectly further such organization.

Instances of government opposing organization are numerous. Let us take society in general. There is a natural tendency for people to shift about, until they finally settle where they find surroundings to which they are best adapted. This tendency is being interfered with by organized government — the state — through emigration and immigration laws. In thickly-populated parts of the earth we find government prohibiting emigration, while in relatively thinly-populated countries the same force is directed against immigration.

In the industrial organism, government interference is so obvious that it is needless to point out any particular case. Wherever we turn, we find ourselves confronted by tariffs, patents, copyrights, licenses, and numerous other legislation. While these laws effectually rob the producer, they also retard industrial organization. For in the absence of these interferences, under free competition, each,

after taking into account the economic demand and natural opportunities, would take to such employment as would be best fitted to his peculiar abilities. This he does now, after taking into account also the tax, fine, or (as I should call it) the robbery, which is attached to the consumption of some products, and which tends to disturb the demand. Now, if this legislation remained unchanged, the adaptation would at last become perfect, and although the producer would still be robbed, the organization of industry would not be retarded. But on account of the constant fighting among the robbers for the plunder, and through other causes, this legislation is ever changing, and the energy, which under freedom, would be used for further organization, is wasted in re-adaptation to changed interfering agencies. Hence, such legislation retards industrial organization; and anarchism, since it opposes government, both organized and unorganized, indirectly furthers social and industrial organization.

Many organizations have no element of government in their make-up, nor are they, generally speaking, directly interfered with by government, and anarchism would not directly affect them. Such organizations are the church, labor organizations, etc. Since men join them voluntarily, they must be presumed to be benefited by them. It is often claimed, however, that even in a purely voluntary organization there is an element of government; it has often been used in this club as an argument against anarchism. "Even in the Franklin Club we can't get along without government; questions are decided by majority rule, and we even elect a chairman by whose decision we abide. Government is useful and necessary, and anarchism an impossibility."

Let us look into this argument. The anarchist, by defining government as invasion of the non-invasive person's liberty, draws a sharp distinction, not only between government and resistance to government, but also between government and agreement. If a number of persons, forming an organization, agree to act in accordance with certain rules, and are joined afterward by other persons in this agreement, the action, then, has nothing in it that comes under the anarchistic definition of government. And unless it can be proved that government, as defined by anarchists, is "useful and necessary," this argument is not valid against anarchism. I may join an organization and agree to abide by the decision of the majority; so long as I hold the freedom to secede, the principle of liberty has not been violated; I am at any time as free as ever; I can, at any time, choose between following a given course or refusing to do so. "But," it will be said, "you have the freedom to secede now; if you don't like the laws of the country, you can get out." This brings the argument to a question of location. While equal liberty implies the ownership of the product by the producer, it also implies the non-ownership of everything not produced. It follows, then, that everything not produced by man (and location comes under this head) can be used or occupied only by common agreement, since no one has a better title than any one else. Anarchists who believe that there will be a considerable advantage in the use of some locations over others, advocate an equal distribution of the difference due to this advantage. The occupant of a superior location would be secured in his occupancy so long as he would divide this difference (the economic rent) with the occupants of inferior locations. Others, believing that in the absence of land ownership the

natural difference would be less than the cost of distribution, logically conclude that such distribution would not take place under liberty, and that so long as any one occupied and used a piece of land he would be secure in his occupancy. All agree, however, that everything not produced can only be used by common agreement.

Now let us get back to the question of secession. Under anarchism the place of meeting of an organization would be occupied by this organization, so far as this place is product (building, etc.), by virtue of paying to the producer an equivalent—by exchanging product for product; and so far as this place is not product (location, etc.), it would be occupied by the organization by virtue of common agreement of the community. If I have joined this organization and agreed to either abide by the decision of the majority or secede from the organization, I have then, upon seceding, no title to the occupancy of the place of meeting. Between this case and that of the man who “may leave the country if he doesn’t like the laws” there are two differences. In the first place, he has not joined the law-making organization and agreed to abide, and in the second place, no one disputes his title to occupancy of the location, which he is given permission to leave. These differences are vital, the analogy, therefore, is imperfect, and the argument is consequently invalid. I have gone out of my way a little to show that anarchism is not opposed to majority rule, nor to any other rule, *so long as this rule rests on agreement—so long as it is not forced by government.*

Summing up the argument, we find that organization is the life principle of all aggregation—that effectiveness increases with organization. We find, further, that the immediate or direct relation of anarchism to organization

is neutral; but that indirectly, because of its opposition to government, anarchism opposes all such organization as depends, somehow, on invasion of liberty. And for the same reason, all organization which would take place voluntarily, and which would be interfered with by invasion of liberty, would be indirectly furthered by anarchism.

Right here we come to the underlying reason of the theory, which is, that government may be beneficial to the governor, but never to the governed, nor to society at large; and that the material well-being of the individual should depend (barring gifts, etc.) solely on his ability to produce; that is to say, it should depend on gratifying the desires of his fellows, and not, as under existing conditions, largely on his ability to rob his fellows. Since all robbery depends on government, in fact is government indirectly, *this ideal state of society, anarchy, is dependent on, and must come about by the development of popular consciousness to a perception of the expediency of non-interference, through mutual respect.* And this will be accompanied by the reduction to a minimum of violence between man and man.

If the reasoning of the anarchist is correct, government must inevitably decline; organized production must (if the survival of the fittest is universal law), finally triumph over organized robbery.

Let us apply to this theory, then, the test of ascertaining whether the conclusions reached by it correspond with the facts as directly observed. We will find, that while any particular government, according to the laws of organization, tends to grow and become stronger until it loses its adaption to surroundings, and dissolution undoes what evolution has done, government in general, (because of the development of the industrial organism, and other

social advancement) is losing the adaptation to its surroundings, and is undergoing a change in the direction of dissolution.

In looking up the tradition and history of government, we find that it took on organic form, through a popular belief in the divine origin of certain men. The earliest traditions represent rulers as gods or demi-gods; and of course, along with beliefs of this kind, there existed a belief in the unlimited power of the ruler over his subjects, even to the extent of taking their lives at will. In times somewhat less barbarous we find these beliefs a little modified; the monarch, instead of being literally thought god or demi-god, is conceived to be a man having divine authority, with, perhaps, more or less of divine nature. Later in the process of civilization, current opinions respecting the relationship of rulers and ruled are further changed. The king, no longer god, or demi-god, or even god-descended, is now regarded as simply God's agent. Still later, we find divine connection altogether denied, and in some countries the monarch is divested of legislative power. Other countries have discarded the monarch entirely, and, in theory at least, the majority of the people rule the minority. Whether or not the wisdom of the majority is believed to be of divine nature, I have so far been unable to ascertain. However this may be, the sacredness of legislation is coming into disrepute, and there are some people to-day, who deny the right of any government, autocratic or democratic, to trench upon their individual freedom. Such is the history of organized government, and it corresponds exactly with the conclusions reached by the theory of anarchism.

All this goes to prove that anarchism is a theory of social life and development, that it furthers all organization

which is beneficial to the individuals composing society, and to society in general, and that it opposes only such organization as is destructive of social order and well-being.

In the light of this, we will understand what the famous French economist meant, when he said, "*Liberty is not the daughter, but the mother of order.*"

Those who wish to investigate the foundations of anarchistic reasoning, may be interested in the following works, of which those marked (*) are specifically anarchistic:

Darwin, Charles.—"The Origin of Species," and "The Descent of Man."

Huxley, Thomas H.—"Lectures to British Workingmen," published in "Collected Essays."

*Proudhon, Pierre J.—"System of Economical Contradictions," and "What is Property?"

Spencer, Herbert.—"The Principles of Sociology," "The Study of Sociology," "The Man vs. the State," and "Social Statics."

*Tandy, Francis L.—"Voluntary Socialism."

*Tucker, Benj. R.—"Instead of a Book."

**Liberty*; an exponent of anarchistic socialism. Bi-monthly; twelve numbers, sixty cents. Benj. R. Tucker, publisher, box 1312, New York. All the above books may also be had from Mr. Tucker.

**I*; monthly, fifty cents a year. C. L. Swartz, editor, Wellesley, Mass.

Copies of this pamphlet may be had from the author, the publisher, or from the editors of the above-named journals, at ten cents each, or sixty cents a dozen.

The Franklin Club is a voluntary organization of men and women, for the discussion of every subject of human interest. All expenses are met by free contributions, and there are no restrictions on the freedom of speech. Meetings are held every Sunday afternoon, at 2.30 o'clock, at 223 Champlain Street, Cleveland, Ohio. A welcome is extended to all.

ERRATA

Page 6, line 14, second word should be *in*, instead of *are*.

Page 11, line 25, eighth word should be *than*, instead of *that*.

NOTE—The peculiar style of typography—alternating unjustified edges—was copied from “I,” an anarchistic magazine published by C. L. Swartz. While, at the time, I rather liked the novelty, I have long since regarded the imitation of it as unfortunate. Though not so intended, it appears to be in effect a burlesque on the style, used by Benj. R. Tucker, of having the uneven edge always on the right-hand side of the page.

FRED SCHULDER.

Spring, 1907.