

Transcript ~ Non-Violent Resistance

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So far in all our considerations of anarchist thought, when we agree with the critiques of institutions and we return to what the anarchists prescribe in practice, we recognize that the anarchists are asking for something which seems nearly impossible. Human beings who come out of a society in which there is inequality, artificiality, corruption, fear, civility to external authority, somehow, despite this fact, have got to stand apart and by strong social criticism, as well as by self-determination, have got to stand apart, rather like Paul said, "Come out and ye be separate," come out of society, and at the same time, try to find out among vast numbers of people what are the potentials for an alternative way of life, for a revolution.

Now, last time we went in some detail into the great call to revolution of the Anarcho-Communists, or the Marxist Anarchists, we may call them, Bakunin and Kropotkin, and we saw how very powerful and moving was their appeal, and at the same time one saw that what they actually helped prepare for was very different from what they anticipated. They laid the basis for the climate which made the Russian Revolution possible, and yet, at the same time the Russian Revolution resulted in the emergence of a single party state which was quite aberrant to the anarchist vision. And then, we also saw briefly how nonetheless among anarchists like Malatesta (others in Spain) the struggle was not given up, and anarchism continued to be a social force even though in retreat, and once it captured the minds especially of those who are working men, who were involved in guilds or in agriculture, and once they saw the logic of it, they really could not give it up, despite all the difficulties of moving towards the anarchist dream.

Now today we are going to talk about non-violent anarchism, and that is what we have had an initial talk given to us already. When you turn to Melville's book (speaking about America in general) he, under the title of thesis, antithesis and synthesis, speaks really about all the elements that made the counterculture possible. Made, you might say, a

kind of revolution, though it was not a dramatic revolution, it was a revolution to the extent to which it had manifestos, programs; it was aborted, caricatured, but nonetheless it produced an irreversible change in the consciousness of vast numbers of people. And that was because in this particular society it could be focused upon the discontent of the young, coming out of the middle class, challenging and questioning middle class values, uncomfortable with institutions, especially the institution of education and mass education. And also at the time, very much opposed to the Vietnamese war and the draft and conscription, it was possible on a considerable scale to give people courage that they do not have to go along with the system, that they could mentally reject the system, think away from it, explore alternatives. And the most significant thing that happened was the attempt to set up about 4,000 and more communes all over this country.

Now next Thursday we shall focus especially on communes, and, if there is anyone here (there must be surely one or two, three or four people) who have visited a commune, who have any experience of a commune, please do come forward and share your experience with the others. Because it's going to be the end of the course; the week after, it will be a revision class, and I invite as many of you as can to come and give your experience or a response to the idea of a commune.

Now, we will talk about communes on Thursday, but meanwhile the question arises, is it possible to have a revolution which is non-violent in the kind of society in which we live? According to Sorel, but also according to the Marxists, according to anarchists in general, the society in which we live has a lot of concealed violence in it, it is really a violent society, even when it is acting in a most legal and constitutional manner it has built into it estrangement and violence, and this is a psychological violence, and this violence is also combined with deception. That is many individuals who run institutions somewhere know that these institutions are repressive, or that there is no real justice that can be secured under these institutions, and they themselves, therefore, unwittingly or partly unwittingly, are tools of institutions in which they really do not believe. And where this happens on a large scale, a kind of arteriosclerosis sets in, where despite the

stimulus there is not the response in institutions, and this is covered over by the rhetoric of institutions, and modern man's society, because of rhetoric, propaganda, advertisement, are continually the very means and modes of communication. Most people, therefore, come on the one hand to be cheated off, to be insulated, to be indifferent to claims, to rhetoric; on the other hand, they also are subtly and unconsciously affected through the rhetoric to think in particular ways, to be focused upon success, failure, certain external criteria. And this is why the entire trend of thought, which is really a state of mind associated with institutions, despite the lack of spontaneous enthusiasm and moral allegiance on the part of those who operate it, still they keep surviving in a kind of namby-pamby mechanical fashion, and they can survive because they work, they work through sanctions, they work through the weaknesses of human beings, they have something to promise individuals who want to enter into the rat race, who want to qualify for further opportunities, and, whether or not they are ever able to find what they expect, but somehow, they can be conditioned to think that this is the only way. So, the illusion that you need to do certain things if you want to survive, if you want to prevail, is widely spread, and though many people are uncomfortable with it, and sometimes they question it, and at other times they escape from it, but essentially the illusion is maintained intact.

Now, as late as the 18th century and early in the 19th century, Saint-Simon, who gave a very powerful portrait of specialization, division of labor, industrial society in all its complexity, argued that once society becomes very complex, a revolution in the manner of the French Revolution will not be possible. In other words, everybody would be so caught up in roles, would be so caught up in ethos of a utilitarian, professional-oriented, vocationalist society, that typically, though many people may be aware of the defects of that society, they all may try to reform it from within, to try by persuasion, by legislation, and by a variety of other means to change it from within. And even though there will be those who are discontented, but the ones who are discontented in a meritocratic society could be very easily alienated, they could be made to appear as if they really did not have what it takes to pull their weight in the system, and as long as they are made to

have this feeling, despite all their protests, they can be made more and more ineffective. And of course, in our time, the way in which this happens very often is through drugs, it can also happen of course in other ways, as we see in other societies. So, this is a very powerful argument that a traditional style of revolution involving mass action is not possible when industrial society reaches a certain level of affluence, maturity and complexity.

And from this point of view, of course, when you look at what John is saying about Spain, there were many conditions that were propitious to anarchism because there was a vast mass of extremely wretched and discontented peasantry, people who for centuries had strong and intense grievances against the rich, against the monarchy, against the church, and there was a tremendous latent revolutionary potential. And once these people could be made to recognize the force of numbers and what they could do by organizing and helping each other and also insulating themselves as far as possible in small towns, in particular areas, from the rest of the country, it would be possible to think in terms of anarchist experiments. Whereas to think of anarchist experiments, in a society in which the momentum behind revolution is very difficult to evoke is very difficult.

But, nonetheless, while all of this is true to some extent, when you turn to Gandhi, you find that Gandhi was able to show in the 20th century that there is a power, an energy, which is released through nonviolence. And this is the same power that you find in the Gospels, because he saw Jesus as what he called a 'Prince of Resisters', a *Satyagrahi*, one of the original *Satyagrahis*. And Gandhi spent a number of years, indeed his whole life, in finding out how this could be spread among individuals and also made the basis of spontaneous mass action. That is Gandhi really did what, even while he was beginning it, Tolstoy at the end of his life, felt was inescapable.

Now, if you recall, Tolstoy had pointed out that there were double standards in society, that society was really rotten within itself, it was corrupted by the canker of hypocrisy,

and this hypocrisy arose historically out of the prostitution and perversion of religious standards, pseudo-Christianity had emerged, and people had learned to be able to use moral and religious language and not to mean it. And they had, as it were, created a climate of thought where people on the one hand had the luxury of feeling a moral sense connected with great moral commandments and imperatives, but on the other hand, they had become extremely skillful in being conditional, in creating exceptions, in making qualifications. And for Tolstoy this produces moral corruption, a contradiction in moral consciousness, because it is only maintained by the fact that people don't know how widespread is the awareness of this hypocrisy, especially among the peasants. That is, each one senses it, but people do not really know initially that vast numbers of people have seen through pseudo-Christianity; have seen through the ideologies and the rhetoric of the state and of the church and of institutions. So, for Tolstoy, once an individual (and it doesn't matter where) shows the power of unconditionality, the unconditional affirmation of the law of love, the affirmation of unconditionality, love in all situations, love at all costs, love without exceptions, never given to the justification of cruelty, torture, war, it could never be like Ivan says, in Dostoyevsky's Brothers Karamazov, justifiable for the sake of anything, even for the sake of some great social program, to harm one single innocent child.

So the moment you start making a break, a radical break with the utilitarian thinking of a market society, of a contractual, commercial, competitive climate, by taking what may be called a deontological, or if you like, absolutist stand in terms of what must be the case, there is a cleansing of consciousness, there is a purification that takes place. Of course, there are dangers because you may be so misled by your unconditional affirmation that you may think you are already in a separate position, you are different from other human beings; or on the other hand, you may, because of your unconditionality, become so aware of your own limitations, that you may be heated up. These are no doubt dangers, dangers there will always be if you do something which is courageous and very different, but if you persist, you will find Tolstoy knew, and he based the whole thing upon the assumption of the existence of the immortal soul. It will

act upon the spiritual will, and you will also be able to carry conviction, be credible with other human beings who are also potentially wanting to do the same thing.

So for Tolstoy the important thing was to resist conscription, he saw that as a lever because he felt that despite all the appeals to patriotism, with all the various plans, wars, and campaigns of states, there was a great deal of humbug, and if only enough people refused to go along and conscientiously objected to conscription, and even went to prison for their convictions, they will be pioneering, even though they will suffer a great deal, they'll be pointing in the direction of what vast numbers of people could do. And Tolstoy felt in the beginning of the century when he wrote all of this that as the 20th century advances, there will be a mass awakening, there will be a much more universal recognition of the humbug in religion, of the hypocrisy in institutions, of the gap between rhetoric and reality, ideology and the actual facts. But not just the facts of social life, but the facts of moral consciousness, and when this, on a large scale, shows itself people will come to see through both the establishment, but also, they will come to see through the intensity and hatred of so-called revolutionaries. In other words, they will come to see that the real revolution goes beyond mere programs and talk and also acts of violence. The real revolution must take place within oneself.

Now, when one reads Tolstoy, one is enormously stirred by what he's saying; one is deeply moved, and yet, because he said all of this at the beginning of the 20th century, one also thinks of him as a tragic figure. In other words, what you might say of all these great men (anarchists of the 19th century) could not anticipate, was the power of technology, was the power of the media. They could not anticipate the enormous possibilities for manipulation through power, and not just visible power, but through subtler means, especially by propoganda, of vast masses of people. That once you release what will be called mass-consciousness with all its psychic energy and potential, the danger of subversion and perversion of this mass-consciousness was very great. In other words, you might say that though they were very prophetic, and though they were on the right side, they underestimated evil, and this of course is very interesting. Today, of

course, we at this point of the 20th century, cannot underestimate evil. At the same time, so many people are so preoccupied with finding scapegoats, with externalizing the problem, finding evil in particular agencies, systems, in particular ideologies, classes, elites, that is they form very quickly into some view where the problem is put outside themselves, and this, of course, is quite convenient to not doing very much.

On the other hand, if you really think seriously in terms of what Tolstoy said, and Gandhi practiced about unconditionality and training, training to be unconditional in one's values and in one's commitment, then of course you have a very different picture. This is of course how Gandhi began, and when he began early in the century, he had not either been much aware of what Tolstoy was saying, nor of Thoreau, nor of anyone else. All that Gandhi knew was the wretched conditions of indentured labor in South Africa. And Gandhi knew that these people were being treated shamefully in terms of laws as understood in Britain, and at the same time that the British government abdicated from doing anything about this terrible treatment of people in South Africa. And Gandhi, who began as a lawyer and therefore wanted first to take to court cases of indentured labor very quickly found that though he could do this, that there was an entire connivance and a system of injustice, and that this required direct action. And therefore, dealing with people (many of whom were really illiterate, illiterate laborers) he was able to show then that if you really understood *Satya* and *Ahimsa*, Truth and Non-violence, and if you were willing to suffer, to do *Tapas*, to suffer for your convictions (and anyway they were already suffering, in any case, tremendous humiliation) it should be possible to organize various modes of direct action, and force people who prefer not to see what is happening on the other side, force them by polarizing the issue, to come to grips with it.

And this was what he began on a small scale, and this went on for over eight years, and he discovered what he called a 'law of progression'. Each time you fight for something specific, which is very small, very limited, like the refusal to carry identity cards or one simple thing, and then you find that once you have mobilized so many people and human dignity is involved, heroes emerge. Heroes suddenly come out of the

most unexpected sources, and you suddenly find there is a moral momentum released, there is a kind of purification, a purgation. And also, if it is done against a system, but without hatred of individuals in the system, surprisingly you'll find that even in the most oppressive regime, certain individual policemen, certain individuals on the other side, among the very rich or among the very poor, they really give you help, they give you sympathy. That is, you find that you cut across the lines. And at the same time, you find that when you are then involved in compelling the government to negotiate and to make concessions, that instead of taking that as a resolution of the problem, you then move on to the next thing in the most natural manner. So, he said that you start very modest, but starting modest, if what you do is clean, honest, and you are willing to suffer for it, it grows larger and larger, and that is exactly what happened. By this 'law of progression', so to speak, what was begun among a very few people in a couple of shanty towns by a very young man, a lawyer, soon became more and more of a powerful movement, and indeed, by the end it summoned the attention of large numbers of people in the world.

Any state has to beware of dealing with a person who is not afraid of death, who is not wanting any possessions, and who is willing to suffer and go to prison for his convictions, because no state has any purchase on his soul. That is, he out of his knowledge of the Socratic exemplification of Socratic Disobedience, but now seeing the same thing on a much larger scale, saw something prophetic, something profound and irresistible in what Gandhi represented. And General Smuts himself, who was the head of the government, came to be truly awed by Gandhi, and he himself wanted to come out of all of this without being undue, morally guilty or culpable, and therefore, tried to some extent to reach (no doubt very late) belatedly, towards the grievances of the people who Gandhi organized.

But meanwhile Gandhi himself was not thinking only of particular campaigns, he had actually evolved a concept called *Satyagraha*. And *Satyagraha*, if you break it up, really means — *graha* means holding, holding with firmness, holding with firmness to truth, but holding with firmness to truth in such a manner that it releases strength, and the strength

it releases does not require any kind of hate—violence, it is true soul fearlessness. So, he called it ‘Soul Force’, and he was able to show an experience among many people that this is something tremendous. Here we are talking of something untapped. Periodically leaders emerge in history who have instinctively tapped something and often tapped it and diverted it towards the wrong ends, but there is a tremendous potential energy in human beings which can only be released out of moral conviction. You can only release a certain kind of energy when you feel that it is right, when you feel wholly involved, when you feel not only good about it, but when you feel that you must do it, or out of a tremendous desire to help other human beings. We find this even at the individual level. Sometimes a person may do something quite beyond his or her strength or means to save another person, but this is something that is true of all beings. And Gandhi said therefore, *Satyagraha* is a release of soul force, and this soul force, when released in individuals, is capable of also arousing soul force in others.

But he recognized that you have to train for this, especially if you engage in that particular type of *Satyagraha*, which is Socratic, which may be called Civil Disobedience. Because he said if you really think out the relation between the state and the citizen, the state is a soulless machine, it is a coercive instrument, which means a state as a soulless machine can never enter into any significant moral equation with the individual human being as a soul. Even those who are human beings with souls, but to participate in administration, who become administrators, who become bureaucrats, who become functionaries in the army, or in different branches of government, even though they may be no different from other people, but once they are put in these positions in their official capacities, they come to become more and more caught up in their roles, to be dehumanized, to be brutalized. That is their very roles require them to administer rules and to make no distinction between persons, but in so doing they become so alienated from those on whose behalf they are supposed to administer these rules, that they become callous, and, indeed, after a point they also become very cunning, capable of twisting the rules in terms of their own needs, or in terms of their own whims. If this is implicit in all organization, in all official capacities, then Gandhi said there never can be

an absolute moral obligation of any human being ever to pay allegiance or obey any government or state, it is always up to the state to justify itself in relation to its obligation to human beings as moral agents. The onus is put on the other side. And therefore, the individual can always appeal to his innate moral authority, but you can never concede anything to the state which is comparable on a moral plane. But if because of the high level, or a certain reasonable level of tolerance and civility, *Satya* and *Ahimsa* at a minimum level, in a society as a whole; because of a certain level of social cohesiveness and social cooperation, and the use of peaceful and cooperative methods a government emerges which sets up laws that are just and fair, these do demand allegiance. But they demand allegiance only because in their particular case they are just, not because they are backed by sovereignty or by force.

So, this means you get into a very kind of paradoxical position. The individual who is potentially in a position to challenge and resist any unjust laws, at the same time is ready to see that every citizen is responsible for the state of affairs, that is, all people are collectively responsible for a government. Now, this talking of collective moral responsibility is very distinctive to Gandhi, it means you can't just get head up as we have become accustomed to do in terms of Republican, Democrat, this, that and the other about the government and the ruler, we are really have got to see that the government is merely a reflection of the general state, the moral state of an entire population. And if this is so, individuals must emerge who are able to show that while they are perfectly willing, despite their own temptations on the grounds of selfishness, to obey the law and show support and loyalty to just laws, they always preserve within themselves, not just the right, but the duty, to disobey and to be disloyal when there is injustice, and by their moral credibility, which is earned, by showing that they care about society. And of course, the finest way of doing this as Gandhi said, immersing oneself in what he called a constructive program, engaging in social work over a period of time, individuals emerge who then become potentially capable of offering Civil Disobedience in a way that distinguishes between the system and individuals, that involves no hatred, but strong moral conviction and strong moral rejection of injustice. And therefore, when

these people are put in prison, they can readily follow certain rules, unlike these so-called, you know, resisters, how are really terrorists, and others and elsewhere, who want special treatment, fuss made over them, and who are really minis very often but can talk big, you know, in collective circles, you know, in crowds that you often get with high school bullies. Whereas the true resisters, they in jail, are very happy to identify with others, they don't want any special treatment. In other words, they are fully prepared to take all the consequences of what they have done. So here we've obviously got a very ideal concept, it is a concept that is meaningful, that has been carried out by remarkable individuals like Martin Luther King or Chavez at a certain time in this country. It's been in fact practiced by large numbers of unknown individuals, and you may even think of people like currently Sakharov who's on a fast in Russia being able to do something of the same because he's not afraid of consequences.

So indeed, what Gandhi pioneered has actually become very attractive. You may think of Danilo Dolci in Sicily, to large numbers of individuals who have the moral stamina to be able to engage in this kind of Civil Disobedience. But Gandhi said, most people, of course, they're not quite ready for this, and they, on the other hand, if they are involved in some institution or system or state which is iniquitous and unjust, they can be readily involved in mass non-cooperation. And non-cooperation does not demand of all individuals the same high moral qualities which are demanded by Civil Disobedience. What it still requires is that people who do this do not engage in violence, they are not carried away by hatred, they, more or less, understand what the issues are. But it is possible in a large scale for a lot of people to boycott, to go on strike, to withdraw allegiance, to refuse to sign a particular law, or to refuse to pay a particular tax. So, it is possible to get a very dramatic large-scale mobilization of the moral power of individuals, and he said that when this emerges, you really find that once the preparation has been made in the past by spreading among vast numbers of people, certain basic values, it will be spontaneous when they are able to engage in mass resistance. So, something like in Bakunin, of an emphasis on spontaneity, but also, even more than in Bakunin a stress upon preparation. And therefore, if at any point when one is involved

in a mass movement one finds that there is corruption, there is violence, there is hatred because some people can't participate in such a movement without that kind of hatred, the leader may have to call off the movement, may have to suspend it. And this happened again and again in Gandhi's own life to the shock of small classes of intellectual followers who were very weak-minded, who really joined him because of his enormous appeal to the vast masses. When Gandhi suddenly suspended a campaign, when things went wrong, they were horrified because they were caught up with results, and when you become infatuated with results, you've put your ego into it. And for Gandhi, of course all human beings have got limitations, but when you do something for a larger purpose, out of love of an ideal, for the sake of other people, there is a release of moral energy which cannot risk mixing it up with crass selfishness or unconscious egotism.

So, this then is the extraordinary challenge, which means then if you engage in any of this, merely to get a kick out of it, or for the sake of some selfish result which affects only you, then he says there is great danger that *Satyagraha* becomes what he called *Duragraha*, becomes a kind of demonic form of *Satyagraha*—a misuse. So, everything which is powerful and vast can be abused, and the moral revolutionary potential of *Satyagraha*, when perverted, can produce something very demonic, indeed, it can actually bring about a great deal of evil. Now, think of what's happening in Iran in terms of some finer elements, finer ideals, especially with that great prophet Shariati, who died sometime ago. Think of a number of individuals who really wanted to see justice after the Shah, but then think of also the release of emotions which could not be controlled, and then the mixing of them with religious justification, pouring holy oil upon hatred, and you really see quite a lot about how a lot can happen very fast, within a very short time, and suddenly one is left with an immense demoralization, demoralization of the people, a demoralization of the people which can have long-lasting effects. If the Shah's regime, with all its injustice, could have been bad for Iran in the long run, but what happens subsequently can have a much more long-term effect that is demoralizing. And Gandhi, in fact, experiences this when he was a young man in South Africa itself, because certain people joined his movement, not these common simple people, but certain intellectuals,

especially one so-called sadhu, this so-called yogi, who was a plausible man, kind of a smooth talker, and he started to be very active in organizing, but in fact, he started embezzling funds, he started seducing women, and when Gandhi heard about all this (of course the great mass of people wanted nothing to do with him) he looked at him and he said, "You know what you've really done? If you play around with soul-force, you run the risk of becoming soulless."

So, Gandhi saw grave danger to playing around with these forces. So, now you really come to see, if you like thinking about this, why then do we not have a better society which releases our stronger moral energies? Well, until we can become minimally selfless, and sufficiently honest in our recognition of what these forces are, and how we use them, we actually (despite certain advantages and gains) we may then find we're in a far worse position than now we are. It is as if behind what exists, a kind of balancing has taken place, a kind of moral balancing of all the mixed variables in all the psyches, of all human beings, and that's what we call the system. Now, that doesn't mean to say we should go along with it and say this is what we deserve and therefore we stay there. No, we should think beyond it, we should be ready to act, we should be ready to innovate, and we should also especially, by a deep concern with the masses of human beings, be willing to get into constructive program-like-activities, and also pioneer new boards, communes, lifestyles, all of that.

But the moment we talk in terms of confrontation (and sometimes confrontation is unavoidable) and indeed, it may be unsought by some of the heroes of society, but you must realize that you are dealing with very deep emotions, and you yourself have got to enormously purify yourself, purge yourself of weakness. This doesn't happen all at once, whether it be to the Greek hero, to Socrates, to various heroes in myths and legends, indeed, they had limitations, they had pride, they had perversity, but they purged themselves over a period of time, until eventually they became purified and chastened and UTTERLY humble. And Gandhi himself showed this, he experiences this, but not just in himself, he was able to draw this out of vast numbers of unknown heroes,

individuals who started off with limitations and violence, but who, by being submitted through the ordeal of being put in prison, of being beaten, suffering, caricatured, misunderstood by relatives, and ridiculed by society, but who eventually became very strong. And I've met many of these people, and when they are old, you see a kind of mountainous strength, combined with an immense gentleness, an overwhelming love. So, what he talked about is real, and it is as real as our willingness to really think about it and understand the assumptions and premises, because it's really all based again upon the premise that man is an immortal soul, and as an immortal soul is capable of drawing tremendous energy. You might call it a kind of atomic theory of the soul. That just as it is possible by splitting the atom to release enormous energy that could be destructive or creative, so also, it is possible to, by concentration and purification and purgation, within one, two, few individuals, to release immense energy, and this energy can tap energy in others, and over a period of time, it could have a cleansing and purificative effect, which cannot be judged simply in terms of certain yardsticks or criteria of progress or of results.

So given all of this, it is certainly worthwhile thinking about *Sathyagraha* in its broadest sense, and he called it like a tree, in which the trunk has to do with *Sathya* and *Ahimsa*, Truth and Nonviolence, one of the branches is Civil Disobedience, another branch is Non-Cooperation, but there are other minor branches which have to do with purificatory and penitential methods, like fasting, you know things that you do on your own, but, also, certain ways in which you're willing to suffer, and by suffering touch the hearts of others. And he gives a whole variety of modes and forms, but they all are rooted in the dynamization of Truth through the power of Non-violence into a force or an energy that is disciplined by *tapas*, that is tested through mistakes and the acknowledgement and correction of mistakes. That putting the ego on the line and taking the ego more and more out of what one is doing, in this way one becomes more and more capable of acting as a clear and pure mirror of the very finest in oneself, which can also draw from other human beings their latent excellence, their latent recognition in their immortal souls of Goodness, Truth and Beauty. So, this is certainly something that I think everybody would benefit by thinking about and studying, but meanwhile, in relation to actual

experiments in society, without being able to produce a total non-violent revolution, then we are really talking of seeing if there are certain limited arenas which can be relatively insulated from the corruption of society, and in which certain values could be practiced. And whether you think of this in Gandhi's case, it was through an ashram. He set up an ashram, a kind of monastery, where certain people took vows, they took unconditional vows—vows of fearlessness, truth-telling, non-violence, and they were very willing to discipline themselves severely in relation to those vows. And this, of course, can only happen among a few, and in that kind of situation there are also a lot of problems. But nonetheless, it is a kind of pioneering, it is a kind of pioneering where a few individuals may be able to accept the kind of discipline for which they are ready, freely and voluntarily. And though this will be, you might say, a great challenge to their strength, they can also release through the power of love a joy, creativity, innovation, cheerfulness, that can enable them to improvise many ways in which they could become more and more successful, more and more of an example, a potential example to others who want to do the same. Now, of course, this is not what's happened, this is not what's happened because one of the troubles in communes is that people, though there is tremendous enthusiasm, which they mistake for moral strength, they tend on the whole to be too permissive and indulgent towards their own weaknesses, and towards, and sometimes, of course, strict towards others but/or in other cases indulgent towards the weaknesses of others, and through all of this unless you have a father figure, unless you have somebody who is vicariously going to be doing everything for people, which really doesn't work, it starts to fizzle out.

So, the big question is whether in regard to anarchist social experiments, or in regard to society as a whole, while making allowance for human limitation, human error, human weakness, do we want to organize on the basis of what is strong, releasing the spiritual will, or do we want to allow in that organization a capitalization and consolidation of weakness? So, this then is the central question, and, this is, you might say, the ultimate challenge of anarchist thought. What is the relation between the strong and the weak in a human being, in, “the spirit is willing, though the flesh is weak”, in

the words of Jesus? Can anarchists, while aware of the weaknesses of the psyche, and of the ego, of the acquisitive instinct in man, at the same time release the strength that is potentially present in human beings, but which is forfeited by institutions, because institutions work through bribe and threat. Institutions deliberately work through your fears, and through one's fears, institutions reinforce one's sense of parasitic dependence upon something outside; one's suspicion, one's fearfulness, one's fragility, and whether it's fragmentation of consciousness, this of course can become very much something widespread and inescapable. So, to be able to see this clearly and to be able to make a difference in one's life does require an initial reflection upon some powerful moral challenge such as you find in Tolstoy and Gandhi, asking whether you can accommodate in your consciousness an unconditional commitment to what Tolstoy called 'The Law of Love', to what Gandhi calls true Non-violence, *Ahimsa*. Unconditionality... Because without unconditionality in your meditations and in your moral affirmation, you cannot really make the initial step, even though I am going to make mistakes, but the initial step which will then help you to find out calmly and patiently over a period of time what is the particular pathway for you, and in conjunction with others or like-minded, to do something that is meaningful even within the system while at the same time taking advantage of the disintegration of the system. Both can go on together.

So, this will be one of the things we will talk about next time. And I'm happy to say that in the examination also you will have a very wide range of alternatives. There will be 25 questions out of which you have to do 3. So really, there is plenty of option, and don't have to worry about it, but really read over what you're already interested in and think over also some of your more fundamental ideas and spend the time at the exam in reading the paper very carefully, because you will also find in case you turned up, suppose you were one of those who never attend a lecture, never read a book, but because you'll read the exam paper, you will be reading 25 quotations, and by reading so many quotations, from then you will be able to, you know imagine what anarchists have said and you could feed it in, so that would be alright. I hope you enjoyed the course, and I hope to see some of you next term in Parapolitics.