Reprinted from:
Jeffrey Ian Ross (ed.), Controlling State Crime: An Introduction (New York: Garland, 1995).

Eliminating State Crime by Abolishing the State

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State crime seems inevitable as long as there are states. In the well-known formulation by Weber (1947), states are communities based on a monopoly over "legitimate" violence within a territory. What makes violence "legitimate" is that it is sanctioned by the state itself. This violence is perpetrated by a variety of state actors. There is no higher power to ensure that this monopoly over violence is used for the greater good, and, indeed, it is regularly used for the aggrandizement of ruling elites at the expense of the general population.

Is it really feasible to expect that crimes by the state can be overcome by reform measures such as international agreements, laws, regulations, oversight committees, or even the organized action of community groups? Such efforts, however laudable, may only mask the problem, which is the underlying structure of the state itself. Consider an analogy. When slavery was widespread and generally accepted, was there a point in trying to reform the practice? Did it make sense to prosecute a few of the slaveowners who were excessively brutal, to pass laws about hours of work or about the buying and selling of slaves? Surely, such reform efforts helped the lot of many slaves. But as well, it was essential to oppose the practice of slavery itself.

In this chapter, I proceed by examining five possible goals or visions of a world without states—namely, communism, world government, small size, libertarianism, and anarchism—and strategies for achieving these goals. In each case, I discuss

whether the goal and its associated strategy would be likely to reduce or eliminate state crime. I do not argue that states must be abolished to eliminate state crime, nor that the problem of state crime is sufficiently serious to warrant abolishing the state. (In both cases, the nature of the alternative to the state is crucial to the argument.) Rather, I make the more modest claim that action toward the goal of abolishing the state offers *one* strategy for dealing with state crime. Personally, I believe that this strategy is important, but only future initiatives can determine its efficacy.

Abolishing the state, in my view, is not a process of achieving social change and then finding that social problems have been eliminated. This assumes a dichotomy between revolution and reform. Rather, the process of challenging and replacing the state should be linked to immediate challenges to state crime. More generally, abolishing the state is a process, not an end point (Gowan et al., 1976: 2).[1] Nor is it likely that a world without states will be free of crimes and other social problems. There will continue to be a need for struggles to achieve a world without oppression.

Approach 1: Communism

Communists claim that their ultimate aim is a society without the state (namely communism in its original sense, before the term was used to denote bureaucratic state systems and their official ideology). Their usual method is to capture state power in order to destroy the capitalist state. Historically, however, Leninist practice has produced enormously powerful states that have shown no signs of withering away. Theoretically, the Marxist tradition has devoted little attention to the social organization of a stateless world or how to get there. Most Marxist critiques of the state are of the *capitalist* state and how to abolish it (Wright, 1979), not how to abolish the state per se. Most Marxists focus on crimes linked to capitalism and the capitalist state but show relatively little interest in state crime not linked to capitalism. For these reasons, the communist approach offers little to aid the project of challenging state crime via strategies toward a stateless world.[2]

Approach 2: World Government

Another approach to the abolition of states is the creation of a world government, namely a single state. To those who promote this alternative, the problem with the present state system is its "anarchy," namely its lack of any higher authority to adjudicate and control unruly and criminal members of the international community.

The League of Nations and the United Nations are well-known attempts to develop controls over the actions of governments. Arguably though, these organizations serve more to legitimate states than to restrain their excesses (Yeselson and Gaglione, 1974). In the case of genocide, for example, the UN has generally taken a hands-off policy so long as the killings remain within a single country, as in Bangladesh in 1971 and Cambodia in 1975–1979 (Kuper, 1981). When the UN does act, it is usually at the behest of dominant states (most commonly the United States government).

Perhaps more promising for the prospect of world government is the process of European unification, in which economic and political controls are gradually ceded to central bodies. Imagining this process succeeding and spreading through the world, the end result might resemble a world parliament and a world administration, with varying degrees of autonomy still resting in entities similar in area and population to present-day countries. Present states then might become similar to provinces in current federal systems.

Central administrative control would certainly provide the potential to intervene against local administrative crimes in various parts of the world. But is this likely? All the evidence today suggests that much locally organized, nominally non-state crime—such as private crime syndicates, vigilantes, and death squads—survives and thrives through open or tacit collusion with state bodies (Chambliss, 1989). Why would this be any different under a world state?

Another fundamental problem with the world state is that it might itself engage in state crime. The advocates of world government have not explained how to overcome this problem. Both psychological and sociological studies show that the greater

the concentration of power, the more likely it is to be misused (Comfort, 1950; Kipnis, 1990; Sorokin and Lunden, 1959).

Finally, what is the strategy for achieving world government? Most of the arguments seem to assume that because it is a good idea, people (or at least present elites) will support it. There certainly is no program of action that links a transition to world government with systematic challenges to state crime.

Although the usual idea is that world government will result from an evolution toward world unity led by public-spirited elites, in practice it is much more likely that it will result from a world war. Methods of bureaucratic social organization and associated technologies have made possible increasingly larger empires; a world empire is entirely feasible today. The aftermath of nuclear war or collapse of the world economy could well lead to world domination by a single power (the United States is the prime candidate). In this scenario, the prospects for benevolent world rule are remote (Martin, 1984: 124, 258–261).

In summary, the vision of world government is flawed as a direction to challenge state crime. Local government crime could still persist, and the world government itself could become a world oppressor. Just as problematic, proponents of world government have no strategy that links strongly with challenges to present-day state crime.

Approach 3: Small Size

According to one school of thought, the primary source of problems with modern social institutions is their large size (see, for example, the journal *Fourth World Review*; Kohr, 1957; Sale, 1980). A big organization is susceptible to inequalities of power, usually with a small dominating elite. Bureaucracy is the standard form of large organizations, and hierarchy is a defining characteristic of bureaucracy (Perrow, 1979). States commonly involve the rule of millions or even hundreds of millions of people. The opportunities for exploitative rule, crime, and many other evils are due to the scale at which power may be exerted—or so, at least, say the critics of large size. A more moderate

position is that big size exacerbates many of the problems associated with social institutions. Certainly it seems that egalitarian social relations are easier to establish and maintain in small, face-to-face groups (Mansbridge, 1980).

For the purposes of the discussion here, it is not necessary to decide whether or not large size is responsible for social problems. All that is necessary is a vision of a world without states, achieved by reducing the size of political units and hence the scale of governance from millions of people to perhaps thousands or tens of thousands, small enough so that the apparatuses associated with the state become unsustainable or too small to operate oppressively.

But what exactly is the vision of a world without states? There are various images presented, including the ancient Greek democracies, New England towns (governed through town-hall meetings), and, more recently, bioregions. Setting aside the internal workings of these models of society, a key issue is the relation between the small units and, in particular, how they can act against aggression and repression, two central state crimes.

One often-cited model is Swiss-style democracy, based on autonomous cantons and a weak central government. Switzerland is known as one of the most enlightened and nonrepressive countries in the world today. Militarily it is neutral and has avoided the major European wars of this century (Lloyd, 1980). Its system of local control has a degree of conservatism (illustrated by some cantons refusing the vote to women much longer than in other parts of the world), but also a degree of participation much greater than most societies (Barber, 1988).

Switzerland is still criticized for being home to banks and multinational corporations that are exploitative. Although the central military command is weak, the society itself is highly militarized. Switzerland has a thriving arms industry, including a substantial export business.

The case for small size does not depend solely on the Swiss example. The positive features of Swiss society can be used as a basis for a vision—or, more properly, a range of visions—that can be used in various parts of the world. One example of this is the work of Kendall and Louw (1987, 1989) that draws from the

Swiss example to propose a canton-style model for South Africa. In their model, the autonomous cantons can choose for themselves their form of social organization. For example, there might be socialist, laissez-faire, radical white and black nationalist cantons (Kendall and Louw, 1987: 123–134). So long as people are free to emigrate and immigrate and cantons can secede or be expelled from the system, choice will be maximized and oppression limited.

Although Kendall and Louw propose that South Africa be decomposed into a multitude of cantons, they still envisage a role for a South African state, to carry out certain collective functions such as military defense. Needless to say, this raises some serious problems. What is to stop the military forces from aligning themselves with particular groups and intervening internally against certain cantons? Who will guard the guardians? What is to ensure that the "minimal state" remains minimal?

The discussion so far suggests that small size may be more hospitable to a society without oppression, but it is hardly a guarantee. The nature of the small units needs to be better specified. Small is not necessarily beautiful. After all, many more children are battered by family members (most commonly fathers) than by the remote state apparatus. Smallness needs to be linked to appropriate forms of social organization. Some possibilities are mentioned later.

So much for the goal of small size. What about a strategy toward this goal? Can a strategy to promote small-scale associations be part of a challenge to state crime? The big problem here is that proponents of small size have no strategy. Kohr, guru of this movement, argues the case through many chapters in his 1957 book *The Breakdown of Nations*. One chapter is titled "But Will It Be Done?," the text of which has one word: "No!" With this pessimistic attitude, it is not surprising that Kohr presents no strategy.

Likewise, Sale presents a vast amount of evidence for small scale in his mammoth book *Human Scale* (1980). But on the question of how to move toward human scale, he says that people will have to work out the methods themselves—on a small scale.

It seems that the basic technique used by proponents of small size is the power of argument. They seem to think that if the evidence is presented, people will be persuaded and proceed, in their own way, to bring about the alternative. This is not the first movement to imagine that good ideas are sufficient in themselves to bring about social change. If this were actually the case, the world would long ago have been blessed with universal peace and prosperity.

The vision of small size does have some implications for practice. One is that the organizations and activities to bring about smaller social institutions should themselves be small and decentralized. This implication draws on an assumption common in "prefigurative politics," namely, the practice of trying to behave according to the ideal that the activity is aimed at achieving. This principle can also be called "turning the ends into means," or "living the alternative." As will be described later, this principle has a varied application.

Approach 4: Libertarianism

Many libertarians are intensely hostile to the state. Market-oriented libertarians, found in greatest numbers in the United States, oppose state regulation of the capitalist market. Instead, they favor extension of the market to areas such as education, prisons, pollution, roads, professions, organ transplants, drugs, telecommunications, and many other areas that are state-run or state-regulated in many countries. Although some libertarians are comfortable with the existence of large corporations, others want a free market without the distortions of either government or corporate monopolies.

There is much controversy among libertarians about the exact form of their ideal society, but for the purposes here it is necessary to mention only the role of the state. The usual solution is to propose a "minimal state" to carry out only those functions necessary to protect the radically extended market (Nozick, 1974). Two key elements of the minimal state are the military, for defense against external threat, and the legal system (with police or military enforcement), for ensuring compliance

with market principles. The foundation of the market is private property, which must be protected against theft, blackmail, and so forth.

There are a number of criticisms that can be made against the radical extension of the market. One fundamental criticism is that an unregulated market is unstable, in the sense that there is nothing to prevent massive inequalities from developing. Some individuals may become extremely rich and powerful, while underprivileged groups may be unable to survive. Private charities may help the disadvantaged, but one likely result of severe inequalities is collapse of support for the market and political agitation for some sort of change. There is a body of literature arguing that the state is essential for the survival of capitalism (Moran and Wright, 1991). The political and economic instabilities engendered by the market require constant intervention in order to maintain some sort of stability.

Another big problem is the minimal state itself. Why should the military and legal functionaries sit primly in their restricted domain, stick entirely to regulating the market, and refuse to use their power in other ways? The capacity to use violence for warfare is closely linked to the use of violence for internal repression (Gurr, 1988; Tilly, 1985). What would stop the military from joining with powerful entrepreneurs to build their own power?

The evidence from many countries today is that the military and police are strongly political, usually supporting the most powerful economic groups (large landowners, large corporations) and opposing populist movements. The rise of modern states in earlier centuries was a process intimately linked with the rise of capitalism as well as the concentration of means for organized coercion (Tilly, 1975; 1990). The supporters of libertarian capitalism have not shown how the state can be kept at some minimal level.

The goal of the minimal-state libertarians seems insufficient to eliminate the state and, therefore, state crime. But what about the methods to achieve this goal? Can they contribute to reducing state crime?

There are a number of strategies used by libertarians. A primary one is continual promotion of the libertarian message

through newsletters, radio, magazines, and meetings. Another is lobbying and agitation against various government functions.

These behaviors can play a role in challenging state crime. Libertarian critics of the state have often played a key role in exposing crimes, such as actions by spy agencies and harassment of citizens by police and taxation officials (see, for example, the journals *Inquiry* and *The Pragmatist*). It should be noted that many libertarians see measures such as taxation and compulsory schooling as forms of state crime, and they seek to convince others of this perspective.

Another strategy that can be used by libertarians is to establish a political party. Most successful in this regard is the Libertarian Party in the United States, which in recent years received the third-most votes after the Republicans and Democrats. A political party typically seeks to increase mass support and, ultimately, obtain political power to implement its program. Although a small party such as the Libertarian one may have no immediate prospect of victory, its efforts can apply pressure on other parties to adopt some of its policies. If a few representatives can be elected, they can play a powerful propaganda role and, if by chance they hold the balance of power, be influential in terms of legislation.

But there seems to be an inherent contradiction in a libertarian movement, premised on reducing the role of the state, seeking access to state power through a political party. There is no example of a party seriously implementing a program that eliminates central bases of state power, leaving a skeleton state to administer a market-driven society. Indeed, all the evidence is that political parties, as they grow and become serious contenders, become adapted to the goals of the state. In Europe since 1945, the state has grown under all types of governments (McEachern 1990). The Libertarian Party in the United States has not developed an organizational strategy that would resist this process.

Perhaps, it could be argued, however, that the Libertarian Party is mainly a vehicle for libertarian ideas, not a serious party of government. Even so, simply by constituting itself as a party and participating in the process of elections, the Libertarian

Party legitimates the representative system of government and, in turn, the state (Ginsberg, 1982).

For these reasons, some libertarians reject the Libertarian Party and, more generally, participation in activities that provide support or legitimation for the state. This perspective is boldly articulated and elaborated in the journal *The Voluntaryist*. Voluntaryists reject the state entirely—including the minimal state—and propose in its place a society based entirely on voluntary agreements. The economic system is one based on exchange, namely, a market, but one without central regulation. All standards, regulations, and procedures are developed through voluntary processes, such as the development of time zones by the railways in the United States, prior to government control.

With no state, there is no taxation, and hence all health, education, and welfare services must be organized from the community. With no state, there is no military. The voluntaryists recognize that the military is the foundation of state power. They advocate the use of nonviolent action as a replacement for military force.

Clearly, the voluntaryist vision of a world without states is one in which state crimes have been eliminated, and also one in which there is no power base for other sorts of crimes. What then of the practice, of the strategy for getting there? Does it hold potential for challenging state crimes?

A total commitment to voluntaryist principles in one's life means living as a voluntaryist today, and that means noncooperation with all aspects of the state. This means, for example, accepting no payments from the state, using private health and education services, and refusing to pay tax, join a political party, or vote. Most difficult is refusing to pay tax. One way to avoid paying income tax is to obtain goods and services through private barter arrangements.

There are limits, of course, to what individuals can and want to do to avoid supporting the state. Only a few would adopt a policy of noncooperation in every area immediately. But the more who do, the easier it is for others. For example, the expansion of private, cooperative education or barter arrangements gives people experience in voluntary approaches;

the continued operation of viable alternatives to state-run systems gives credibility to voluntaryism. Both the experience and credibility can encourage others to participate.

The basic strategy of voluntaryists in relation to state power is to withdraw consent and participation. This can be a powerful method if enough people join in, but what will encourage them to do so? Voluntaryists have only their personal example and small efforts at communicating their viewpoints. In the face of the massive shaping of beliefs and behaviors by mammoth government bodies, it would seem that voluntaryists have little prospect of winning significant numbers of converts.

More generally, the strategy of withdrawal of support is seldom enough to challenge crimes. State crimes can occur as long as enough people are willing to participate in them. That a minority refuses to join in is an inconvenience but not a fundamental obstacle. Generally, a more active stance is needed to challenge the crimes.

The great value of noncooperation is its symbolism. Even if only a few people refuse to cooperate, others will then be encouraged to do the same. But the power of the symbol depends on circumstances. If the noncooperators are isolated and obscure, their acts will have little influence. In order to have a greater practical impact, voluntaryist principles for a transitional practice need to be worked out. Should every soldier and government employee who comes to believe in voluntaryism immediately drop out of their job? Or is there some method of action that allows promotion of voluntaryism from inside the system?

To these arguments, voluntaryists might respond that their primary concern is to take a principled position against cooperation with the state, not to develop an elaborate strategy. In the case of state crimes, voluntaryists would be alert to the danger of becoming part of the crimes or committing new crimes to stop the state's crimes, both of which are dangers if one is cooperating with the state. Rather than attempting to develop a grand strategy, voluntaryists have faith that if individuals act according to their consciences, using the proper means (voluntary, nonviolent action), great things can result.

Approach 5: Anarchism

In its classical formulation, anarchism is a political philosophy that sees the state as the primary source of oppression. But some classical anarchists and many contemporary anarchists oppose not just the state but all forms of hierarchy. In such a view the state is not necessarily seen as a more fundamental or crucial form of hierarchy. This broader conception of anarchism incorporates critiques of capitalism, patriarchy, professions, liberal democracy, and domination of nature. In short, anarchist society is a society without rulers or domination (Ward, 1982).

Whereas libertarians and voluntaryists favor a large role for the market in a society with a minimal or no state, anarchists generally see a lesser or nonexistent role for the market. The overlap and distinction between the two orientations is indicated by some terminology: "libertarian socialism" is generally considered synonymous with anarchism, whereas the radical variety of libertarianism where the state is entirely eliminated is called "anarcho-capitalism," or "free-market anarchism." An important difference is that anarchists are far stronger than libertarians in their critique of capitalism and, more generally, market systems. In relation to state crime, the important point is that anarchists wish to abolish the state and replace it by systems of governance that minimize the ability of any part of society to exercise power over others.

The number of groups that call themselves anarchist is not large. Furthermore, relatively few people know about these groups or understand their philosophy. However, the anarchist conception of the world has a much wider sway than suggested by the impact of anarchist groups. Many members of environmental, feminist, nonviolent action and other community groups have beliefs that could be described as anarchist (although they themselves may not describe their beliefs this way). They are opposed to systems of rule, whether capitalist, communist, or liberal democratic, and support instead methods of direct democracy such as consensus. They reject reform solutions of achieving power through individual advancement or parliamentary election, seeing bureaucratic hierarchies as part of the problem. Their aim is to empower individuals and

communities rather than to gain power and use that power to "help" others.

This type of anarchist "sensibility" is widespread. Activists would agree that in many countries anarchism has much more support than do vanguard left parties (which seek to capture state power). This sensibility is seldom due to the direct influence of anarchists or anarchist writings. Rather, it appears to be a response to hierarchical systems of power; it reflects a belief that a more egalitarian society is both possible and desirable.[3]

Because most intellectuals are tied to dominant social institutions—universities, governments, mass media, professions, corporations—they are likely to adopt or develop sets of ideas compatible with the interests of those institutions, and especially with the interests of intellectuals themselves (Cabrera, this volume; Gouldner, 1979). Support for the state is overwhelming among intellectuals, including those subscribing to Marxism, the main dissident political perspective in universities. As a consequence, there has been relatively little development of anarchist theory compared both to dominant perspectives such as liberal democracy and neoclassical economics and also to challenging perspectives such as Marxism and feminism.

Many anarchists do not believe in trying to envisage the ideal nonhierarchical society, except in very general terms. They have faith in people's ability to develop a self-managing society and do not want to inhibit the creativity of the people by specifying in advance what should be achieved. This is not very helpful for developing strategies against state crime, which necessitates a look at anarchist methods and visions.

A central anarchist principle is that the means should incorporate the ends. If the goal is a society without bosses, then it is foolish to put faith in bosses (including politicians and trade union leaders) to bring it about. If the goal is a society without violence, then it is foolish to try to bring it about using violence. Anarchists reject the Leninist project of gaining state power in order to lay the basis for the eventual withering away of the state. Because of the anarchist commitment to making means reflect ends, it becomes fruitful to assess anarchist methods and their potential for challenging state crime.

To further explore anarchism, I will briefly outline four visions of anarchist society and the methods used to get there, and then comment on the implications of these visions and methods for challenging state crime today. Many anarchists would see the first vision discussed here, federations of self-managing collectives, as identical with anarchism itself. I prefer a broader picture, incorporating under the banner of anarchism a variety of ways of organizing society without hierarchy.

Federations of Self-Managing Collectives

The most common picture in the European anarchist tradition is self-management and federations. *Self-management* refers to some form of direct democracy for a workplace or community, such as voting in mass meetings or consensus. The model is inspired by the practical experiences of collectives, soviets, and communes, especially those developing in periods of revolution or crisis, such as the 1871 Paris commune, soviets in Russia in 1917–1918; soldiers' councils in Germany in 1918–1919; collectives in Spain in 1936–1939; and egalitarian movements in Hungary in 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968, and France in 1968. People on these and other occasions have shown the capacity to organize work and life without politicians and managers (Guérin, 1970).

Direct democracy sounds fine for a community of hundreds or thousands of people. But what about a million people? How is coordination to occur? The usual solution proposed is federations. Each self-managing group would choose a delegate for a decision-making body at a higher level. The delegates could be elected, but they would be bound to represent the views of the collective, unlike the more familiar elected representatives, who are free to break election promises and to vote against the wishes of electors. Delegates can be replaced at any time, following a decision of the self-managing group, again unlike most elected representatives. Finally, the task of delegates is to coordinate decisions made at the local level, not, as in the case of representatives, to make decisions that are implemented from above. Delegates would examine alternatives and take them back to local groups to approve or reject. Finally, in a federation of self-managing collectives, most decisions would be made at the local level. Only a few decisions would require meetings of delegate groups or, at higher levels, federations of federations and delegates from delegate groups.

Sarvodaya

The Gandhian vision of *sarvodaya* or village self-management, falls squarely within the anarchist tradition (Kantowsky, 1980; Ostergaard, 1985; Ostergaard and Currell, 1971). Gandhi was opposed to all types of hierarchies, including caste, gender, capitalist, and state hierarchies. He opposed the process of Western-style industralization and "modernization" through which Indian elites mimicked European economic and political institutions. Instead, he supported village-level direct democracy as the basis for society. Gandhi's successors have pursued this vision.

Today, Gandhians vary in their attitudes to the state. Although some of them support state intervention on at least some issues, others support Gandhi's focus on grassroots issues. The Gandhian "positive programme" contains a radical rejection of Western-style economic development. One reason for this rejection is the oppression that seems inevitably associated with the division of labor in modern industry: specialization and large scale are linked with the need for management, and this opens opportunities for control by elites (whether corporate or government). An alternative is "bread labor," in which individuals participate in the direct production of goods for local use.

There have been significant *sarvodaya* movements in India and Sri Lanka for decades that have had numerous committed adherents and that have pioneered innovative projects. Yet progress toward *sarvodaya* remains slow at best; Western-style industrialization has been the dominant force in "development" in these countries. Furthermore, much of the Gandhian movement in India has been institutionalized, for example, becoming part of the educational establishment.

Demarchy

Burnheim (1985), in his book *Is Democracy Possible?* presents a different model for organizing society without the state and without bureaucracy, both of which he sees as incompatible with participatory democracy. Burnheim argues that the usual models of participatory democracy cannot deal with the problem of time and complexity. If everyone has to be involved in every decision, they will not have enough time to become properly informed about the issues.

Burnheim proposes that decisions be made in communities by "functional groups," namely, groups of people dealing with such issues as education, industry, land development, garbage collection, and so forth. There would be groups for all such functions in each community of perhaps tens of thousands of people. There would be no state and no government bureaucracies: the functional groups would make decisions and implement them directly. In order to avoid the usual tyranny of the majority, political parties, vote-trading, and other pathologies of representative democracy, the groups should not be elected. He proposes instead that group members be chosen randomly from volunteers, as in the selection of a jury.

As yet, no demarchy movement exists. There are experiments taking place in Germany and the United States that show the effectiveness of randomly selected groups for decision-making (Crosby, 1990; Crosby, Kelly, and Schaefer, 1986; Dienel, 1988; 1989), and there are a small number of individuals who are promoting the idea of demarchy and projects related to it. It remains to be seen whether demarchy can be turned into a process for social change to replace state and bureaucratic structures.

Networks

Self-organized networks are commonplace. There are networks of stamp collectors, computer enthusiasts, engineers, and advocates of world government. The success of such networks raises the question, is central authority necessary? If networking can accomplish everything needed, perhaps the state can be superseded.

The word *network* is a bit of jargon, of course. Most of the entities called networks could just as easily be called organizations, associations, or collectives. There is some difference, though. Most traditional organizations are based around a locality: employees at a workplace, residents in a community, local people with a common interest. Networks remove the requirement of locality, as they can include people from countries around the world. Secondly, networks come with a minimum of bureaucracy and centralized control.

Could a thoroughly networked society do without the state? The details have not been worked out, but certainly this is a potential direction for developing an alternative (Andrews, 1984). What seems to be lacking is any idea of the institutions for economic and political life. But then again, perhaps the idea of "institutions" is part of the problem. With networks, people decide what they want to do rather than being forced to act within a rigid framework. As long as there are numerous networks in any area of interest, and it is easy to start a new network if the existing ones are unsatisfactory, there should be ample scope for individuals to choose and shape their own lives.

How to Bring About the Change

The above are brief accounts of four models of society that could be characterized as anarchist. They give an idea of how society could be organized around cooperation and participation. These models do away with the state and, thereby, state crime. But what is the transitional practice?

Anarchists promote their visions through several means. One is by spreading the ideas of anarchism through leaflets, magazines, and books. Anarchists believe in persuasion through rational argument. They do not want to manipulate individuals through clever advertisements, moral appeals (to guilt or self-interest), or special tricks of group dynamics. They believe that most people, given the opportunity to make a rational and informed choice, would prefer a society without the state or other hierarchies (see, for example, the journals *Freedom*, *Kick It*

Over, Our Generation, and *Social Anarchism*). Of course, the world is dominated by hierarchies, so only a few individuals are willing to push for such an alternative against the status quo.

But once people do come to believe that anarchism is a good idea, what do they do? Basically, they do what they can in their own life to oppose hierarchies and increase the degree of self-management. They can treat others as equals, regardless of sex, race, wealth, degrees and so on. They can oppose bosses of various sorts, including politicians, police, government bureaucrats, business executives, and church leaders. They can refuse to participate in armies. They can join a variety of community organizations and actions that involve people taking control over their own lives: action against male violence, cooperatives for production and distribution of goods and services, environmental action, peace action.

From this list of activities, it appears that anarchists (whether or not they use this label) help provide a direction for many grassroots campaigns that challenge rather than accommodate or reinforce the state.

Whereas liberal feminists support an increased role for women within existing hierarchies, including the state, anarcha-feminists oppose the state, seeing it as an oppressive institution that reinforces and is reinforced by patriarchy. Anarcha-feminists (like radical feminists) support feminist strategies that empower all women and especially those with the least power.

Whereas reform environmentalists welcome the intervention of the state against environmental destruction and seek this intervention through lobbying and support for certain politicians and political parties, environmentalists of an anarchist orientation seek first and foremost to empower local communities to help create an environmentally sound society, through direct action against threats and through community action for renewable energy, and so on; they are suspicious of methods that rely on governments to protect the environment.

In these and other areas, the role of anarchists (or those with anarchist inclinations) is to push campaigns in the direction of self-management (or, to use a different jargon, grassroots empowerment) and to withdraw support from campaigns that rely on or reinforce the power of dominant institutions, especially the state.

How effective are these efforts? Have they made any impact on state crime? Such questions are very difficult to answer. But there is a plausible case to be made that (1) social movements' central strength comes from their ability to convince and mobilize large numbers of people rather than to persuade a few people at the top and (2) social movements have sometimes had a major restraining effect on state crime.

Galtung (1991) argues that the strength of the peace movement in the West made it possible for Gorbachev to be elected head of the Central Committee and subsequently proceed with *perestroika* in the Soviet Union. Without the Western peace movement as a restraint on the Western military threat, Soviet hardliners might have been able to argue more successfully against Gorbachev and his initiatives. Thus, it can be argued that the subsequent collapse of Soviet-type regimes in eastern Europe owed much to the political space made possible by the peace movement.

Of course, the Western peace movement in the 1980s included people from all parts of the political spectrum. But those of anarchist persuasion, such as within War Resisters' International, have long played a crucial role in peace movements. Arguably, their efforts in this instance helped open the space for the collapse of European state socialism and its associated state crimes (see reports in *Peace News*).[4]

Another example is nuclear power. The movement against nuclear power has been a grassroots one, involving groups as diverse as farmers in France, fishing communities in Japan, and suburbanites in the United States (Falk, 1982). Although the most prominent arguments against nuclear power have been reactor accidents, long-lived radioactive waste, nuclear proliferation and other such hazards, a number of activists became involved because they opposed the expansion of state power that would inevitably accompany a nuclear society (Friends of the Earth, 1986). To protect against terrorist and criminal use of nuclear materials, strict policing would be required; in other words, a nuclear society would involve increasing the power of the state and pose grave threats to civil liberties (Jungk, 1979).

Rather than becoming an all-pervasive energy source as envisaged by its advocates, nuclear power has been stopped in its tracks. Campaigning against nuclear power has been so effective that people in most countries are acutely aware of its dangers. Some part of this success can be attributed to activists with an anarchist sensibility (Falk, 1982). This is perhaps most apparent among advocates of renewable energy and alternative technology, which are seen as both technological and social alternatives to nuclear power and fossil fuels (Boyle and Harper, 1976; the journal *Undercurrents*).

Another test of anarchist influence comes when there is a social crisis undermining the credibility of existing state structures, such as during the revolutionary periods mentioned earlier. Anarchists, by spreading ideas of egalitarian alternatives and encouraging initiatives that give people experience in nonhierarchical social arrangements, can help to encourage people's action against the state and toward self-management in the event of a crisis. For example, when socialist regimes in eastern Europe collapsed in 1989, the only alternative perceived by most people was Western-style capitalism and parliamentary democracy. Because there had been very little anarchist activity—state socialists are intensely hostile to anarchism, so most efforts to promote anarchism were repressed—few people were familiar with anarchist ideas or ready to act on them. Anarchists hope that, if anarchist ideas become more widely understood, on future occasions it will be possible to "seize the moment" to make significant steps toward an egalitarian society.

Abolishing the Military

The military is central to the power of the state and also a key instrument of some of the most horrific state crimes, including war and genocide. Abolishing the state requires abolishing the military. How is this to occur? What, if anything, is to replace the military?

Some pacifists believe that the solution is to eliminate the sources of conflict in society: the inequalities, the injustice, the indoctrination into ethnic and national chauvinisms. They favor

conflict resolution, win-win solutions to problems, and enlightened educational practices. An alternative approach is to accept the inevitability of conflict and to develop nonviolent methods of waging conflict. The techniques of nonviolent action include symbolic behaviors such as petitions and fasts, noncooperation such as strikes and boycotts, and intervention such as sit-ins and alternative institutions (Sharp, 1973).

Organized, preplanned nonviolent action by members of a community, proposed as an alternative to military defense, primarily is called social defense, and is alternatively referred to as nonviolent defense, civilian defense, and civilian-based defense. The basic idea is that people oppose aggression and repression using a range of nonviolent methods and that this capacity for nonviolent struggle replaces or eliminates the need for military forces (Boserup and Mack, 1974; Sharp and Jenkins, 1990).

Among the proponents of social defense are two orientations of interest. The first is "elite reform." In this model, social defense is national defense—defense of the state using people's nonviolent action—which will be introduced because it is perceived by elites as a more effective form of defense. Setting aside arguments against the elite reform scenario, it is clear that this model retains the state. Of course, a state with no military would be incapable of many of the most serious state crimes and would undoubtedly be a great improvement over typical states today.

For the purposes of this discussion, the focus here will be on the second orientation, grassroots initiative. In this approach, social defense is likely to be introduced only as a consequence of many local initiatives that develop the capacity and skill of people to wage nonviolent struggle. This includes workers, environmentalists, feminists, antiracist activists, and others learning the methods of nonviolent action for their own struggles. Their efforts could then be combined against state aggression and repression (Martin 1993).

The grassroots approach to social defense contains its own built-in transitional practice: grassroots nonviolent action is both the goal and the method to achieve the goal.

Wars and states are a center of attention in many histories. The largely nonviolent people's struggles are usually omitted. Yet there are some dramatic examples of nonviolent action against even the most repressive regimes. These include the passive resistance by Finns to Russian attempts at tightening control in 1898–1905; campaigns in India, led by Gandhi, against the British in the 1920s and 1930s; the nonviolent resistance to the Nazi occupations in Norway, Denmark, and the Netherlands; the toppling of military dictatorships in Guatemala and El Salvador in 1944 by "nonviolent insurrection;" the collapse of the Algerian Generals' Revolt in 1961 due to noncooperation by soldiers and civilians; the remarkable nonviolent resistance by the Czechoslovak people to the Soviet invasion of 1968, the Iranian Revolution of 1978–1979, a largely nonviolent people's resistance that was successful against a horrifically brutal regime; and the collapse of the communist regimes of eastern Europe in 1989.

These historical examples suggest that nonviolent action has considerable potential for opposing aggression and repression. They certainly do not prove that social defense would always be successful. Indeed, in many of the examples, nonviolent action toppled one violent one but could not stop the rise of a new violent one (as in the case of the Iranian Revolution). It can be expected that if social defense is introduced as a preplanned and well-organized defense system, it will work better than the largely spontaneous efforts noted above. Even so, no method can always be successful. Certainly, military defense regularly fails.

Nonviolent action is a potent challenge to crimes of violence precisely because most people abhor violence. If both sides in a dispute use violence, it is possible to discredit the other one. If one side remains nonviolent, it can win more sympathy. This explains why the killing of thousands of guerrillas and peasants in the course of a guerrilla war may cause little comment, whereas the killing of unarmed protesters (e.g., Sharpeville, South Africa, 1960; Beijing, China, 1989; and Dili, East Timor, 1991), can generate international outrage and change the balance of forces. In these cases, communication of information about the events to outsiders is crucial. Reliable and

authoritative information about crimes is essential to nonviolent struggle. It is the foundation of the important work of Amnesty International and would be central to any system of social defense.

The evidence suggests that nonviolent action is one of the most effective means for opposing state crimes (Sharp, 1980). Social defense is the institutionalization of nonviolent action, and hence would be a system for preventing state crime.

Although social defense is normally presented simply as an alternative to the military, it is a serious threat to the power of the state as well. Social defense requires developing the skills and willingness of members of the population to take action against hostile elites. These same skills can also be used against other forms of oppression. For example, if workers learn how to shut down their factories in order to oppose an aggressor, they will also know how to act against their employers. If government employees learn how to destroy files and liaise with citizens in order to oppose an aggressor, they will also be better able to help movements against the government. Social defense is, therefore, a logical part of many strategies against the state.

Among the libertarian and anarchist opponents of the state, there is a range of views about the military. Some libertarians support a minimal state, which usually includes the military. On the other hand, some libertarians and anarchists favor abolishing the army and arming the people. Finally, voluntaryists, Gandhians, and probably a majority of anarchists (see the debate in the journal *Freedom* throughout its 1992 issues) favor nonviolent methods and goals. Furthermore, almost all the social movements that include people with a vision of self-managed society, such as feminists and environmentalists, rely exclusively on nonviolent methods.

Conclusion

When examples of state crime are mentioned, few critics think that the solution is to abolish the state. The state is so much a part of contemporary thinking that reform is usually the only approach considered. Partly as a result of this neglect, visions of

society without the state have not been given much attention. The libertarian and anarchist models that do exist are sketchy.

Similarly, there is not much social action that is explicitly linked to the aim of abolishing the state. But on closer scrutiny, there is quite a lot of action that is compatible with a program for abolishing the state. This includes challenges to state initiatives and development of self-managing groups, networks, and campaigns using non-violent action.

A large gap exists here: a gap between the ambitious goal of abolishing the state and the diverse local initiatives that strengthen self-reliance and withdraw power from the state. To fill this gap, strategies and campaigns need to be developed. This would both sharpen the visions of society without the state and focus the campaigns that are relevant to moving toward them.

Abolishing the state is obviously a long-term project and to some people may seem implausible or impossible. In this chapter many of the difficulties facing challenges to the state have been emphasized. In order to decide whether this is nevertheless a useful direction for social action depends on an assessment of alternative strategies, namely, reform solutions that seek to control, rather than eliminate, state crime. Given that state crime seems inevitable whenever states exist, and that some essential functions of states, such as military forces and taxation, can be considered criminal under some definitions, in the long run the reform agenda may actually be more utopian than the task of abolishing the state.

NOTES

* I thank Sharon Beder, Robert Burrowes, Richard Gosden, James Green, Val Plumwood, Jeffrey Ian Ross, Ralph Summy, Joe Toscano, Carl Watner, John Zube and two anonymous referees for helpful comments.

1. On "nonreformist reforms," which provide a process for transforming the state, see Gorz (1967: 6–8).

2. Marxism undoubtedly can offer insights and inspiration for challenging various types of state crime. However, the concern here is how to challenge state crime via abolishing the state, and the Marxist tradition provides very little in this endeavor. There is not a single well-known Marxist discussion on strategies to abolish the state. Marx's own works can be interpreted in Leninist, social democratic, and anarchist directions. Of these, only the anarchist tradition provides much guidance for the task of abolishing the state. This explains the emphasis on anarchist rather than Leninist or liberal strategies in this chapter.

3. The statements in the previous two paragraphs are recognized by many activists, but appear seldom to have been "authenticated" by scholars (exceptions include Epstein, 1990; Falk, 1982). Because the professional interests of most intellectuals are linked to the state (Gouldner, 1979, 1985), the presence of anarchist sensibility is least apparent in academic journals. It is more apparent in movement journals, such as *Chain Reaction* (magazine of Friends of the Earth Australia), *Earth First!, Green Revolution,* and *Peace News* (now produced in cooperation with War Resisters' International), although even in these forums only an articulate minority is represented. Newsletters put out by organizations are more likely to represent the views of ordinary activists, but these seldom are circulated beyond the local area and thus have low visibility by scholars. Three highly experienced and theoretically knowledgeable activists support the points made here about anarchist sensibility: Robert Burrowes, a leading nonviolent activist; Felice and Jack Cohen-Joppa, editors of *The Nuclear Resister;* and Val Plumwood, a prominent philosopher and environmentalist (personal communications).

4. There are, of course, other interpretations of the rise of Gorbachev and the events of 1989 in Europe. This is not the place to present or adjudicate between such interpretations, since the aim here is to argue only that there is a case that social movements have played some sole in restraining state crime through their ability to persuade and mobilize people at the grassroots. On the impact of social movements, see for example Ash (1972), Foss and Larkin (1986), and Piven and Cloward (1979).

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