

Action and Existence

Anarchism for Business Administration

Second Edition

Pierre Guillet de Monthoux

*Department of Business Administration,
University of Stockholm*

ACCEDO Verlagsgesellschaft, Munich

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Pierre Guillet de Monthoux

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Translated by D. E. Weston.

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With the help of two literary examples drawn from the novels of P. O. Sundman. The Expedition and Engineer Andrée's Balloon Journey. I illustrate the notion of a business as a project, suggesting something of what is involved. I finish with the problem of explaining these strange journeys or projects. This requires an examination of the leaders' and other participants' inner situation, an inward-turning journey

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Why do projects arise? The shortcomings of logical and anthropological explanations are discussed, while the alternative of regarding projects as arising from engagement in response to the problems of freedom is developed. Modern organization theory talks of decision-making which implies a freedom to choose. I use an existentialist text by Simone de Beauvoir to illustrate the nature of human circumlocutions in the face of the problems of freedom. Max Stirner, the father of individual anarchism, had somewhat similar ideas in the 1840s. Camus on the subject of revolt

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The nature of human freedom, and with it the quality of human engagement, is often hidden under layers of mystification. The nineteenth century anarchists primarily attacked three classical types of mystification: property or capital, the state, and the Church. Against these three, they advocated socialism, anarchism, and atheism. I also deal with some more modern mystifications such as technology, historical determinism, and the contemporary religion of science. Feyerabend has outlined an anarchistic theory of science. His idea is that the large discoveries in science have come to pass through what he calls 'counter-inductive method'. New thought and creativity in everyday life can also be based upon such a 'swimming against the stream' method. Intuitive and spontaneous revolts can also be creative

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The anarchists want to replace religious belief with a belief in human spontaneous reason. I shall attempt in this chapter to illuminate the idea of spontaneous action, which is also

known as direct action, and its anarchistic and existential importance. What were the notions of Proudhon, Bakunin, and Stirner in this respect? What is the meaning of action propaganda? In conclusion, a taste from the 'sabotage-handbooks' from the beginning of the century. It is shown how the author of one such manuscript, a certain Herr Roller, had a perspective upon action that was in many ways similar to that of Sartre some fifty years later

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This chapter shows part of what can be called 'the catalogue of revolutions'. I begin with Proudhon's mutual decision programme, the revolution of 1848, and Proudhon's reaction to its failure. Bakunin's reaction on the Paris Commune of 1871 follows. Lastly, the peaceful socialist's interpretation of the Russian Revolution of 1917, dealing in particular with the two revolts against socialist bureaucracy: Machno in the Ukraine and Kronstadt. The question then arises as to how it happens that organizations stiffen into bureaucracies even under so-called socialism

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Revolutions often lead to authoritarian systems, to bureaucracy, and sometimes even worse tyrannies than existed previously. Different theories concerning bureaucracy — Marx, Kautsky, Luxemburg — are dealt with in passing, together with their relevance to the situation in the Soviet Union during the 1920s. Finally, I come to Rizzi's theory, which interpreted the bureaucracy as the new ruling class

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Why are springtimes so short? This chapter refers to the experiences of Chile and Portugal. Kolm's ideas on the

subject are compared with the reasons given by Kropotkin for the failure of his ideal medieval town society. The problem is posed concerning the difficulty of inspiring a change of attitudes during the period of change between different forms of society. A society imbued with an anarchistic spirit would certainly require a change in the mode of economic distribution. Different modes of economic distribution—*theft, gift, and exchange*—are discussed at some length

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The criticism of ideology has never been more intensive than today. This has led to doubts concerning the place and validity of nineteenth century anarchists' insights concerning spontaneity. Is spontaneity some kind of mystification? Marcuse rejects the 'hippie revolt'. The dissolution of the class system. The 'soft' conservative opposition that leads to a 'hidden' totalitarian state. We must have a new belief in spontaneity. The intuitive criticism of humour and laughter can show the way. Humour attacks the serious society intuitively or—to use an anarchist word—spontaneously. I give examples with, among others, Freud's discussion of humour and a fresh German criticism of industry

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Anarchist practice has not been only subversive. There have been practical experiments in a constructive search for a suitable form of organization, planning, and administration. I show from, in the main, two sources, the experiences of Spanish syndicalism and the partially peacefully inspired Yugoslavian self-government

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In the first place I attempt to show that the major fault of the so-called bureaucrats is their anti-philosophical attitude. Second, it is suggested that a combination of the closely related anarchistic and existential ideas provides the possibility of attacking that anti-philosophy. The foremost weapon in this attack is existential philosophy, and I attempt to show what this implies. What is the existentialist view of humanity? What do existentialists think about scientific explanations? Another weapon is art. Writers provide a source of anarchistic and existential information concerning the world of organizations which is not available in the official literature on decision-making and the theory of organizations

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WHEN I AWOKE EVERYONE HAD GONE. THE SNOW HAD melted and springtime had arrived. How had it all begun?

In the bathtub. Out of water life is born. The reptiles shuffle out of the water, let their legs grow, while their understanding blooms. *Ecce homo*. Aphrodite pops up like a seal out of a hole in the ice and with a sweep of the head covers her gills with golden locks.

I lay in a 37° solution of soap and water when the telephone suddenly began to ring. When I tried to get up I noticed that my legs, arms, and parts of the rest of me had been dissolved by the soap. Dissolved like snow in the spring sunshine. I saw one of my feet floating away to the bottom end of the bathtub. With an ear, the only extremity I had left, I paddled in that direction. It was hissing there like a spitting cat. The water bubbled, alternating between red and black. The telephone rang again.

My foot sank to the bottom. Would I be able to fish it up with my teeth? The attempt must be made. I let my head dive down into the bubbling water, using my tongue as a rudder to guide me towards the foot, and attempted to bite the big toe. An incredible bellow. A mire of slimy, jelly-like mess. Black strands of hair. Up to the surface. Above the waterline the howling became stronger. My head is thrown like a float to the bottom end of the bathtub. It lay there and bobbed in the swell of a giant who raised himself powerfully out of the water. Then the telephone rang again. 'I must answer,' said Bakunin and splashed out upon the tiled floor.

He threw down the receiver and rushed out of the kitchen. 'Get out for great Satan,' he bellowed, 'they will soon be here'.

The first came after ten seconds. In a taxi, but without a penny in his pocket. Bakunin helped him out with a pound

he found in the hallway. I heard how they romped like bears. They came arm in arm into the bathroom. It was Stirner. It could be seen from the glasses he was wearing.

Later it became lively. In rushed Proudhon, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, and Durruti, quickly following one another. Each of them took a sandwich. Then came a man with a telegram. In the bathtub it began to heave. A frog hopped up in one corner.

After a time the whole room was full. Proudhon and Durruti grilled knackwurst in the tiled oven. Jerry Rubin had locked himself in the toilet with Simone de Beauvoir, while Sartre, disguised as a green frog, nervously hopped around outside the toilet door. Just then there was a knock on the door.

'Are there any good children . . . ?' The Father Christmas did not succeed in saying more before the whole gang were attempting to pull off his beard. But it was fixed as firmly as a mountain. The matter was now clear: Marx wanted to stick his nose into the proceedings.

Hardly had they thrown out Marx before Henry David Thoreau landed on the windowpane on the back of a swallow. They each received a bowl of cornflakes and kept silent. During this time the whole gang had gathered on the floormat to play an amusing card game called 'the ridiculous parts', and Stirner had managed to gain three hundred points by cheating, when an American football burst through the window and hit Nietzsche on the moustache. In came a gang of American professors who were searching after stuff for an article about Bakunin. He allowed himself to be interviewed with good humour, I remember, but when one of the professors wanted them all to go down to the yard and play ball 'in order to learn to know each other better' he became angry and threw out the gang.

By this time it had become dark. The snow fell thickly and Engineer Andrée's balloon had just landed in the park. After this ignominious experience, they searched for a taxi to take them to a waiting press conference. They could not find a taxi. In any case, this is what Andrée said when he had rung. Besides, they were hungry, he said. Three hours later Marcuse rushed in. Scared out of his wits. He and Heidegger had been selling Christmas trees when three chaps had begun to shoot at them. They had hit Heidegger, who moved clumsily in his winter fur coat having been drinking blackcurrant brandy during the whole afternoon. Marcuse had survived with his life intact.

This message created a depressed atmosphere in my apartment. We all knew how it would go. It became so quiet that we could only hear Jerry and Simone giggling.