

Colin Millen



The Vision

An imaginary view of a better future for mankind and a possible way forward. Published by Health Books for the author. 9 Seacliff, Vincent Road, Sheringham, Norfolk NR26 8BS £1.00

I am unsure how to classify this book; at one level it is a short story in the science fiction genre but it is also possible to read it as a proposal for a course of action or an expression of a desire for change, perhaps even a pre-written autobiography?

The book played tricks with my mind a bit, sometimes taking a predictable route while always ready to bring up original and challenging ideas. The toying with names is reminiscent of some Dickens but in the third chapter a far more personal aspect develops which in the final short paragraph reveals as much as the book does (don't read that bit before you've read the rest or you'll spoil the effect).

Personally I'm often wary of science fiction due to its ability to bypass current problems with a bit of invented technology, but this story isn't full of gadgets; rather bemused travellers having things explained to them. Many of the explanations will be familiar to people reading this review but there are surprises amongst them and hints of ideas to work on.

If you want something to make you think, then read this book a couple of times and consider what it is saying; if you prefer your science fiction to be all aliens and beams then watch 'Star Trek'.

If he develops the ideas within this book further then he will be saying things which

are thought provoking; if others act on the ideas it could cease to be fiction.

Rory Bowskill

Letter

Dear Total Liberty,

I was interested to read in a recent copy of "Total Liberty" the letter from Nicholas Walter attacking Laurens Otter's contribution to your magazine.

It was very sharp and viperish, one felt almost sorry for Laurens for being subject to this tirade.

However, it was all true, but then Laurens has been writing similar stuff for decades without provoking an onslaught from the Freedom Press establishment, the pope and Nicholas Walter before now.

It just makes you speculate "what can he have done to upset them". It must have been something really horrendous.

Ron

Anarchism

Anarchism seeks the abolition of the State and present day governments.

Anarchism is the philosophy that favours a free society organised along the lines of voluntary co-operation, individual liberty and mutual aid.

Anarchist Society would be a decentralised network of communities and individuals working together to satisfy their mutual needs for goods and services, while exploiting no one and living in harmony with the natural world.

Every person has the right to make all decisions about his or her own life. All moralistic meddling in the private affairs of freely acting persons is unjustified.

Government is an unnecessary evil. All governments survive on theft and extortion, called taxation. All governments force their decrees upon the people, and command obedience under threat of punishment.

The principal outrages of history have been, and continue to be, carried out by governments. On the other hand, every

advancement of thought, every betterment of the human condition, has come about through the practices of voluntary co-operation and individual initiative.

Anarchism implies co-operation, individual freedom and responsibility.

For further information and a free sample of Anarchist literature send an A4 38 pence stamped and addressed envelope to: The Anarchist Information Network, Box EMAB, 88 Abbey Street, Derby DE22 3SQ

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Total Liberty

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Editorial

Building a new society within the shell of the old has a long history within the Anarchist tradition dating back to the Utopian Socialists of the 19th century and the Revolutionary Syndicalists of the early 20th century. However, despite these historic linkages, this ideal and practice is still a living and ongoing tradition. Throughout the world there are individuals and groups seeking to put Anarchist ideas into practice within their communities and their own daily lives. Anarchists have never been slow to take advantage of advances in communications techniques to help spread Anarchist ideas, having made much use of Printing, the Telephone, Radio, Television and now the Internet.

However, there is a certain irony in the recent development of this means of communication which enables such widely geographically separated groups and individuals to communicate, share information and ideas and to co-operate. The Internet and World-Wide-Web owe their origins to the State and Capitalism, but they are proving a valuable tool for Anarchists,

community activists, campaigners and people everywhere in their attempts to build a more human and free world. Now at the click of a key-stroke we may learn about Food-not-bombs groups in America, or about the UK based community group 'Brighton Anarchist Teapot' or about numerous struggles both local and global. We can hear *and respond* to calls for solidarity from individuals, groups and communities denied access to the mainstream media. Such a *culture of resistance* is not only new but is now very diverse and almost too numerous to list. For the first time in its history, members of the anarchist movement across the developed world and in other countries also, have a means of communication with ordinary people and with each other which bypasses political control, for the time being at least, though this may change. At present we can communicate outside the established hierarchies of the State and corporate monopoly capitalism.

Total Liberty has established a homepage on the internet at: <http://freedom.tao.ca/totlib/index.html>. Readers of Total Liberty with internet access can view editions

number 1, 2 and 3, which are archived along with some pamphlets and articles which did not make it into the printed version.

This edition includes articles on anarchist theory *and* practice including the editor's examination of LETS and the legacy of Josiah Warren, Wendy McElroy contributes a short article on Benjamin Tucker. Peter Neville looks at Sociology and the writings of Norbert Elias, Richard Griffin responds to John Griffin's article Pragmatic anarchism from TL 3. Joe Peacott makes a critique of Noam Chomsky's latest writings.

The next edition of Total Liberty will be available in September subject to finances and written contributions.

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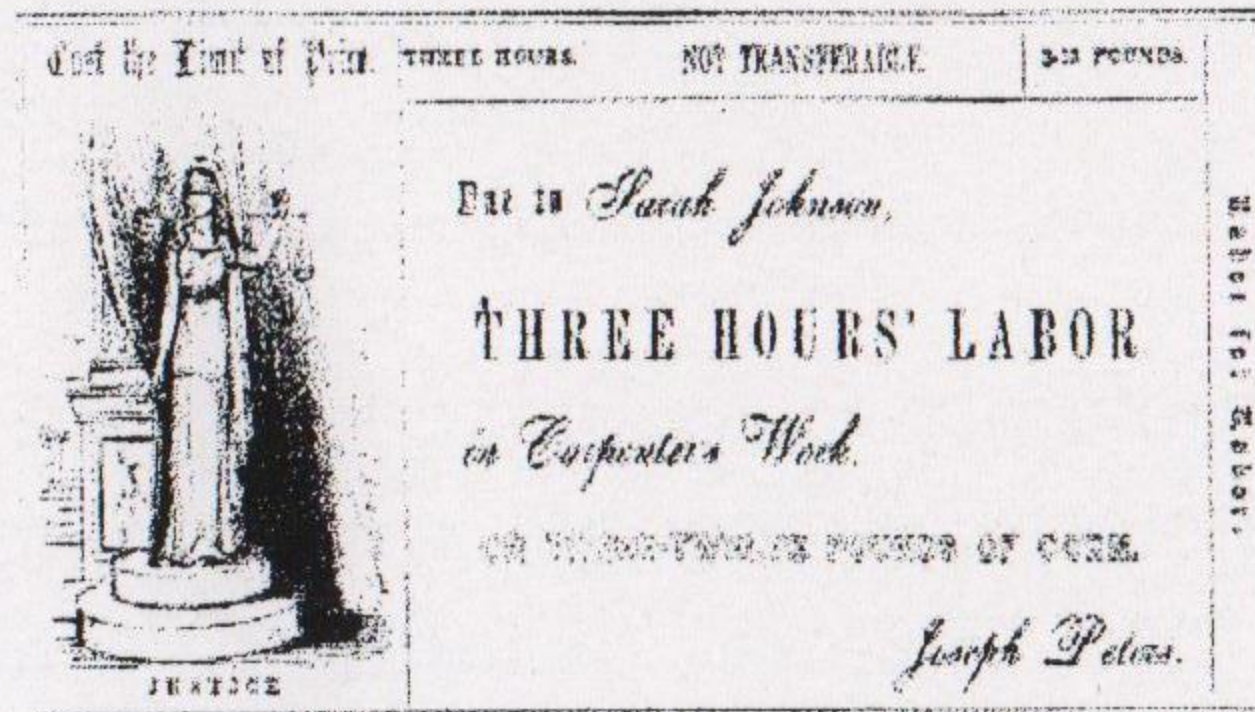
LETS and Josiah Warren

Many Anarchists are aware of Proudhon's theory of Mutualism and his ideas for a 'Bank of the People', but few realise that there is a widespread network of modern equivalent local 'Banks of the People' currently working in Britain. I refer to *Local Exchange Trading Schemes*, or LETS as they have become commonly known, which now exist in many towns, villages and communities across Britain, Europe and indeed the world. According to Jonathan Croall's recent study 'LETS ACT LOCALLY' (1) there are now nearly 450 LETS schemes in the UK and Ireland. For the benefit of readers unfamiliar with LETS, a LETS scheme operates as a club whose members exchange goods and services by means of a local directory, a sort of Yellow pages, where they list their 'offers' and 'wants'. Members generally pay each other either wholly in a local currency issued by the scheme or in a mixture of local currency and hard cash. Some schemes issue LETS 'cheque-books' some issue vouchers. Belper LETS uses cheques payable in 'Chevins' (a name of a hill overlooking the town.). The usual reason that persons ask for a mix of cash and LETS currency is to cover the price of raw materials. For example, a person making a bench for someone through LETS might take hard cash for the price of the wood, screws, nails and glue and take LETS currency in payment for their labour, or a food co-op might need the cost price of the goods in cash as the goods are purchased from outside the LETS scheme. The LETS scheme records transactions between members, this is the effective 'bank', and a public account is available at meetings for member's information. This also provides a safeguard against free-riders who might exploit the scheme by making purchases while never providing any goods or services themselves.

Membership levels vary from scheme to scheme but can be anything between 30 and the mid-hundreds, Belper LETS has 35 members, Stroud LETS has 320 members while Manchester LETS has approximately 500. Certainly the more members a scheme has the greater the variety of goods and services available to members.

Few LETS members are aware or appreciate the fact that the principles involved in LETS have a very long history going back to not merely to Canada in the late 1970s, nor depression era America of the 1930s but to radicals such as Robert Owen in this country, Josiah Warren in early 19th century America and Proudhon in 19th

century France. In this short article I am considering Warren's contribution and achievements and some of the similarities between his ideas and current practise in LETS schemes.



Josiah Warren was a founder and member of Owen's community *New Harmony*. He was born in 1798 but little detail of his early years survive. It is known that he was a skilled musician and inventor and that in 1819 he joined many of his countrymen in the trek west. There is little reason to doubt Warren could have made a good living, perhaps even a fortune, from his inventive abilities had he not come across Robert Owen and his co-operative ideas. Warren was an active participant at New Harmony helping to frame its constitution. However, the failure of the colony left him disillusioned with Owen's version of co-operative principles. Warren believed the social experiment failed because of what we would today call authoritarianism impinging upon the individuality of the residents. As Warren put it

... 'It appeared that it was nature's own inherent law of diversity that had conquered us... our 'united interests' were directly at war with the individualities of persons and circumstances...' (2).

This led Warren to develop two complimentary ideas. The first being the concept of *Individual Sovereignty* ... 'Society must be converted so as to preserve the SOVEREIGNTY OF EVERY INDIVIDUAL inviolate. That it must avoid all combinations and connections of persons and interests, and all other arrangements which do not leave every individual at all times at liberty to dispose of his or her person, and time, and property in any manner in which his or her feelings or judgement may dictate, WITHOUT INVOLVING THE PERSONS OR INTERESTS OF OTHERS'... (3).

Warren's second idea was that of *Equitable Commerce*. Warren believed, like Proudhon, that all a person was entitled to in terms of property was the product of his or her own labour. Thus Warren, as did Proudhon, viewed rent, interest and profit as

theft. Only labour created value. Warren retained his interest in co-operation as a means to combat poverty, but maintained that co-operation had to respect Individual Sovereignty and allow the labourer to obtain the full product of his or her labour. To this end Warren advocated the exchange of labour for labour and supported The Labour Theory of Value which was current among radicals in both Europe and America, the theory derived from Adam Smith's treatise on economics *The Wealth of Nations*. Many contemporary LETS schemes effectively operate on a labour for labour basis. In most LETS schemes people will provide their goods or services for a similar rate irrespective of the service, and charging differential rates is frowned upon. Warren formulated his own ideas in his book *Equitable Commerce* published in 1846, but unlike many social reformers then and now, he had first demonstrated their practicality in a number of successful social experiments.

The first of these is known as *The Time Store* and was located at Cincinnati, Ohio where in 1827 Warren set up a retail store selling groceries and dry goods on the labour cost principle. Starting with a stock to the value of \$300 he sold goods to customers at cost plus 7% for overheads and in addition charged a labour note based upon the length of time which the transaction took. The note being redeemable in an equivalent length of time of the customer's professional services. Thus if a watchmaker took 30 minutes to make a purchase Warren was entitled to 30 minutes of the watchmaker's time at a later date, or could use the labour note which he received to purchase some other person's services or where such were offered, goods. Warren operated the store at Cincinnati from 1827 - 1830 during which time he had many customers and the labour notes circulated within the community as a form of local currency. (Warren's Time Store had similarities to a number of Food Co-ops established by LETS schemes. In these food is sold at or close to cost and payment may be made either in cash or in a mixture of cash and local currency.) Having demonstrated the practicality of his ideas to his own satisfaction, Warren now proceeded to establish the first of the equity communities.

Warren and his group purchased 400 acres of land at Tuscarawas County, Ohio, and the village called 'Equity' was founded there in 1834. The community members built houses and a sawmill on the labour-for-labour principle. Capital having been secured without interest. Some thirty families were to

make their homes there before the low-lying nature of the land gave rise to an outbreak of malaria and then a second epidemic of influenza led the colonists to abandon the site in 1835.

Warren spent his next ten years working on his inventions, which included a revolutionary rotary press on which the Smithsonian Institute was to print its first Catalogue of the Library of Congress. Warren had earlier in 1833 established his journal *The Peaceful Revolutionist*, arguably the first Anarchist paper in North America. He continued to use this journal and other publications to spread his ideas. However, Warren had not abandoned social experiments. In 1842 he opened a second Time store on the outskirts of New Harmony, where again local people purchased goods at near cost, and used labour-notes at the store and within the community. Warren had customers from many miles away.

In 1846 Warren established a second equity community called *Utopia* on the shores of the Ohio river. Here the members of the community worked on the Warrenite labour cost basis. They worked brick kilns, stone quarries and sawmills. The community had about 100 residents, was economically independent of outside society and lasted over 20 years. It did not disband but evolved into an 'ordinary' community with co-operative and mutualist tendencies. Warren described the nature of the settlement

... 'Throughout our operations on the ground, everything has been conducted so nearly on the Individualist basis that not one meeting for legislation has taken place. No organisation, no indefinite delegated power, no 'Constitutions', no 'laws' or 'Bye-laws', 'rules' or 'Regulations' but such as each individual makes for himself and his own business. No officers, no priests nor prophets have been resorted to - nothing of either kind has been in demand. We have had a few meetings, but they were for friendly conversation, for music, dancing, or some other social and pleasant pastime. Not even a single lecture upon the principles on which we were acting has been given on the premises. It was not necessary; for (as a lady remarked yesterday) 'the subject once stated

and understood, there is nothing left to talk about' - All is action after that'... (4)

Having successfully established 'Utopia' Warren left to return to the eastern seaboard where in 1851 he established his last community *Modern Times*. *Modern Times* was established upon 750 acres of land on Long Island. The land was sold to hand picked settlers at \$20 per acre lot. The initial settlers screened subsequent newcomers to help ensure compatibility with themselves and the labour cost principles. The community was a success, though its proximity to New York not only brought interest from radicals and reformers but also shocked comment from conservative sections of society. The viability of Warren's local currency and independent economy was illustrated by the ease with which it coped with the economic depression resulting from the panic of 1857. Other communities were not blessed with the benefits of their own local currency and economic autarchy. As with Utopia the community never failed or disbanded but gradually evolved. Today *Modern Times* is known as Brentwood and has a population of 45,000.

Warren's ideas, evolving from Owenite co-operative ideas to a native American Anarchism had marked similarities to those of Proudhon's Mutualism and went on to be an important influence within the ranks of American Anarchists not least upon Benjamin Tucker. Benjamin Tucker once briefly set down his economic ideas for a city to develop an Anarchist economy

'In some large city fairly representative... of our heterogeneous civilisation let a sufficiently large number of earnest and intelligent Anarchists, engaged in nearly all the different trades and professions, combine to carry on their production and distribution on the cost principle'... (5) Tucker's proposal was (similar to Proudhon's Bank of the People) to open a bank providing non-interest bearing currency for the purpose of trade and transactions. New enterprises would be able to develop and grow as their 'capital' increased and the projects success would attract increasing interest and participation. Tucker continues ... 'soon the

whole composite population [of the city] would become interested in what was going on under their very eyes, more and more would actually take part in it, and in a few years... the whole city would become a great hive of Anarchistic workers, prosperous and free individuals. It is such results that I look forward to, and it is for the accomplishment of such that I such that I work'... (6)

Tucker's description of his desired city economy sounds much like a LETS scheme.

To return to my initial reference to LETS schemes, it is easy to see the similarities between the economic ideas of Warren, Proudhon and Tucker and a modern LETS scheme. They each create a local interest free currency, they allow free access to credit, allow people to conduct transactions using either the local currency only, or a combination of the local and national currency. In addition each respects the 'Individual Sovereignty' of the person, while allowing local initiative and voluntary co-operation to flourish to the mutual benefit of individuals and the communities they live in. In LETS schemes there is no obligation to trade, and the pricing of individual transactions are left to the contracting parties involved. It is a source of hope that 450 such schemes exist in Britain. They are working examples of practical Anarchist economics in action.

Jonathan Simcock

Footnotes

- (1) LETS ACT LOCALLY by Jonathan Croall. Price £8.00. Published by The Gulbenkian Foundation.
- (2) Alternative Americas by Mildred J Loomis, Page 36.
- (3) Extract from Warren's Practical
- (4) Details in *Equitable Commerce* reprinted in *The Anarchist Reader* by George Woodcock page 341.
- (5) Anarchism by George Woodcock. Section on Warren page 433.
- (6) Benjamin Tucker and *The Champions of Liberty*, edited by Michael E Coughlin, page 84.
- (7) Ibid.

Liberty on unjust authority

By Wendy McElroy

The most fundamental and integrating theme behind 19th century American individualist-anarchism was a belief in the

primacy of the individual sovereignty and the corresponding desire to eliminate all but defensive force from human interaction.

Benjamin Tucker - editor of *Liberty* (1881-1908) proposed what he called 'a society by contract' to replace the society by force he

saw around him. (1) The enemy was unjust authority.

Tucker defined unjust authority as "any coercive force not developed spontaneously and naturally out of the constitution of the individual himself or herself." (2) For Tucker, the dual buttresses of 'society by force' were the authority of the Church and the authority of the State, a union he referred to as a 'double-headed monster'. (3.) He sought to eliminate both. In place of the jurisdiction of Church and State he sought to establish the self-jurisdiction of the individual.

Tucker carefully defined what he meant by the authority of the church and the authority of the state, or Government. (4.) He did not denounce the act of joining a Church as a personal choice, or of accepting religion as a personal code of morality. Indeed he admired certain religious sects such as the Quakers who had contributed heavily to the abolitionist movement, a forerunner to individualist-anarchism. (5) But Tucker absolutely rejected the authority of the Church: that is, he rejected the incorporation of religious values into law or politics. As he stated, "We intend no disrespect to God as an ideal that an individual may hold dear provided such God assumes no authority over others...It is God the office-seeker and office-holder with whom we take issue, and it is only such a God...that makes the politician possible. (6)

Elsewhere, Tucker acknowledged the noble intentions that lay behind the Christian principle of loving your neighbour. Ideally, adherence to such brotherly love would lead to a crime free society based on human co-operation. But, Tucker argued, converting brotherly love into "a 'commandment' is the utter denial...and a perversion of the word 'love'." (7)

Tucker was equally clear about what constituted the authority of the State, or Government. "The anarchist defines government as invasion," he explained, "nothing more or less."

After listing the primary feature of the State as "aggression", Tucker described the second feature as territoriality, "second, the assumption of authority over a given area and all within it, exercised generally for the double purpose of more complete oppression of its subjects and extension of its boundaries." (8) A State claimed a monopoly of force and jurisdiction over a given territory and over all people within that territory. This denied self-jurisdiction (e.g. the right to private trial by jury) to any individual or group of individuals within that territory – a denial that government justified by claiming to protect life and property.

Tucker considered such 'protection' to be, in reality, an outright invasion of person and property. According to Tucker, the State maintained itself primarily through two

invasive monopolies – the power to tax and the power to issue money. Through these monopolies, the State negated individuals "freedom...in their industrial, commercial, social, domestic and individual lives." (9)

As an example of such a denial of freedom, Tucker used the difficult case of collective defence:

"Defence is a service, like any other service. It is labor both useful and desired, and therefore an economic commodity subject to the law of supply and demand. In a free market this commodity would be furnished at the cost of production. The production and sale of this commodity are now monopolised by the State. The State, like almost all modern monopolists charge exorbitant prices. Like almost all monopolists, it supplies a worthless, or nearly worthless, article." (10)

By contrast with the State, a society by contract did not embrace force, and each member had the right to secede. "To indefinitely waive one's right of secession is to make one's self a slave. Now, no man can make himself so much a slave as to forfeit the right to issue his own emancipation proclamation." (11)

Nor did a society by contract claim territoriality, except as agreed to by each member of the territory claimed. A free society had no right to take action against a "non-contracting party" who did not attempt to enter its territory. As Tucker wrote, "if, somewhere between these divisions of territory, had lived prior to the formation of the association, some individual on his homestead, who...had declined to join in forming the association, the contracting parties would have no right to evict him, compel him to join, make him pay for any incidental benefits that he might derive from their association, or restrict him in exercise



of any previously enjoyed right to prevent him from reaping the benefits." (12)

To those who maintained what is currently called a 'love it or leave it' stance, Tucker replied, "By what right am I thrust into the alternatives of recognizing the machinery of the State as the only chance left me in rescuing my life, liberty and possession from invasion." (13)

Footnotes

- (1.) Benjamin Tucker was careful to defend the right of self-defence. In *Instead of a Book by a Man Too Busy to Write One*, he wrote: "...he who resists another's attempt to control is not an aggressor, an invader, a governor, but simply a defender, a protector." (pg.23) "Anarchism justifies the use of force to invasive men". (pg81). Moreover, He believed that if a victim "has a right to use force himself for such a purpose [reclaiming of property], he has a right to secure such co-operative force from other as they are willing to extend. (pg157) In *Liberty VII* (August 30 1890) p.4 Tucker declared, "...there is nothing sacred in the life of an invader."
- (2.) As quoted in *Champions of Liberty*, p.169
- (3.) *Liberty I* (August 20 1881) p.2-3
- (4.) Tucker tended to use the words 'State' and 'Government' as synonyms. In *Instead of a Book*, after defining the State as "aggression" he wrote, "Aggression, invasion, government, are inter-convertible terms." (pg.23). Elsewhere, however, Tucker made a distinction between the State and the Government. The State consisted of two factors: aggression, and territoriality. Government referred only to aggression. Government was the enforcement arm of the State and its most visible aspect. Adding to the confusion is the fact that Tucker, like many anarchists, also used 'government' in the sense of the 'self-government' of the individual or of a voluntary community. At one point he declared, "The State is not government, since it denies Liberty." *Liberty I* (April 15, 1882) p.2-3
- (5.) They too saw government and religion as joining hands in support of slavery. Talk about WmL .G.
- (6.) (*Liberty I*, August 19 1882, p.3)
- (7.) As quoted in Benjamin Tucker and the *Champions of Liberty*, p.167. William

A Reichert "Benjamin Tucker on Free Thought and Good Citizenship."

(8.) *Instead of a Book*, pg.22.

(9.) *Instead of a Book*, pg.57

(10.) *Instead of a Book*, pg. 32

(11.) *Ibid*, pg.48

(12.) *Instead of a Book*, pg. 44-45

(13.) *Liberty II* (Dec 9, 1882) p.2

Norbert Elias: Civilisation and De-civilisation A Review by Peter Neville

One of the most interesting writers on Sociology in recent years was Norbert Elias (1897-1990). A sociologist in the tradition of Max Weber he not only developed a new way of looking at the world: Figural or Process Sociology, but made a major contribution to our thinking on the development of the State through his study of high culture and civilisation. A writer largely neglected for many years, especially by Marxists, and totally ignored by anarchists, his stature as thinker is only now becoming recognised not only in Britain and the Netherlands but his original native Germany. To understand Elias and his contribution we must clear the stage and clarify what we mean by Sociology.

WHAT IS SOCIOLOGY?

Sociology starts with the assumption that all we know about society is a social creation. However, there is considerable disagreement as to the extent and nature of its social production. Basically there are two major views in sociology. The first sees knowledge as stemming from the whole system, regardless of the individuals composing it, and whose freedom of thought is therefore limited. It is the social structure within which individuals operate that is important. The second sees knowledge as created by individuals. The social structure is a creation of their collective ideas and cannot exist separately from them. Thus ideas and meanings are important and the social structure changes as people's ideas change.

The first of these views is called Structuralism, the second Action Theory. Each of these approaches has two main variants. Structuralism may be divided into Conflict Theory and Functionalism, Action Theory into Phenomenology and Symbolic Interactionism.

STRUCTURALISM 1: CONFLICT THEORY

Karl Marx (1818-82) is usually recognised as the pre-eminent figure in Conflict Theory

although there were many other conflict theorists now largely forgotten (see Martindale's "The Nature and Types of Sociological Theory" (1960) for a more detailed analysis). In Karl Marx and Frederick Engels "Selected Works" (1968) p.181 preface to 'A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy' Marx says: "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but on the contrary, their social existence that determines their consciousness". This historical materialism implies that individuals are not free to change society but are products of its economic structure. This is often called the base-superstructure theory (or sometimes the infrastructure-superstructure theory). This thinking is a factor which has also bedevilled anarchist thinkers too and is a main distinction between individualism and collectivism. Although this is not to say collectivist anarchists necessarily accept Marx's determinism.

So called class struggle anarchists often appear to the writer to be more marxist than anarchist although this might be a residue of their political origin. A central tenant of Marx's thinking is found in the notion that at any one time the ideas of the ruling class are the ruling ideas. Of course this could be re-phrased in that the ruling class does not always allow other classes into a knowledge of the full picture but only those aspects of the ruling ideas it is necessary for other classes to know, to secure their subordination and maintain the domination and supremacy of the ruling class.

Later marxists amplified Marx's early views and put their own differing interpretation on them, some of which are said, by some people, to tinge anarchism. Michel Foucault (1926-84) is an example. Other writers in the conflict paradigm such as Karl Mannheim (1887-1947) although influenced by Marx, were strong critics of Marx and marxism. Mannheim was a close associate of Elias at the otherwise marxist Institute of Social Research in the pre-Nazi Germany University of Frankfurt. Many of

those staff escaped to the United States and later became collectively known to western marxists as 'The Frankfurt School' of sociology, conveniently forgetting the contributions of the Institute's non-marxist teachers Mannheim and Elias.

STRUCTURALISM 2: FUNCTIONALISM

The other main brand of structuralism is Functionalism and is in contemporary sociology now associated with the name of Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) although its antecedents were earlier. Durkheim takes the collectivist view that society has changed from both the hunter gatherer and the pre-industrial small scale rural peasant economy (what Durkheim calls mechanical solidarity) to the modern industrial society with its factory system, division of labour and urbanism (which he calls organic solidarity). Although this process of modernism worried him he was not against industrialisation and urbanisation. What he wanted was to ease the process of change in type of society to prevent it leading to social disintegration and to create the mechanism by which we could live together in harmonious solidarity.

ACTION THEORY 1: PHENOMENOLOGY

Passing on to the second major view of sociology, Action Theory. The first type of action theory: Phenomenology is derived from the work of Alfred Schutz (1899-1959) who took and extended the philosophical ideas of Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), about which we need not go into detail here. Schutz rejects the passivity of the structuralists such as Marx and Durkheim stressing the human autonomy in creating the social world. Some phenomenologists stressed the importance of everyday life and the taken-for-granted reality suggesting that much of sociology up to then, included structuralism, was just plain wrong and should be junked and started anew. This was the view of an American Harold Garfinkel (1917-) who formed a version of phenomenology called Ethnomethodology although not all phenomenologists go to this

extreme. Philosophers and psychiatrists have taken Husserl's views in other directions.

ACTION THEORY 2:

SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM

The second type of Action Theory is Symbolic Interactionism derived initially from the work of the social psychologist George Herbert Mead (1863-1931). Mead wrote little during his life but his student, colleague and eventual amanuensis Herbert Blumer (1900-1987) writes, that it rests on the premises that we act towards things on the basis of meanings they have for us. So things and actions are symbols derived from the process of symbolic interactionism, modified through the interactive process.

WEBER'S ACTION THEORY

Although these two strands are important the more important action theorist, sometimes also confusingly referred to as a kind of conflict theorist, was Max Weber (1864-1920) who pre-dated both Phenomenology and Interactionism. It was he (and some say parallel with Durkheim's move in a different direction) who drew sociology away from the crudeness of Marx and developed it as a discipline in its own right.

SOCIOLOGY AS A THEORY

It is interesting that in the Physical Sciences, as Thomas Kuhn (1922-) has pointed out, paradigms, that is, what is seen as social reality at any one time, tend to replace each other (see 'Postscript 1969' of the Second Edition of his work "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions" 1970). What is considered orthodox in science at one time is dominant and is only replaced by a newcomer when the old view is no longer acceptable so it is then rejected. An example in a broad sense might be the replacement of alchemy by modern science or, on a narrower plane, Newtonian physics by Einsteinian physics.

In Sociology however one can have a dominant paradigm such as Structural Functionalism, a version of Durkheimian functionalism dominant in the West in the post-Second World War world period which owes much to the writings of the American Talcott Parsons (1902-1979), existing in parallel with other paradigms. So today marxism, phenomenology and symbolic interactionism operate in parallel, although one or another may be more or less fashionable at any one time.

THE WORK OF NORBERT ELIAS

When Elias began to write it was as if time was against him. Born in Germany, of Jewish parentage, the first part of his two volume work "Über den Prozess der

Zivilisation" ("The Civilising Process") was published in 1939, in Switzerland, in German. He was at the time an émigré part-time teacher in England. Not the best way to start a distinguished academic career, certainly not helped by the tendency of most English-speaking sociologists, including myself, to have no command of languages. Only during the last eight years prior to retirement age did he get a permanent university post, firstly at Leicester University and later getting a professorship in Ghana before, as growing recognition came, moving to Holland and Germany. He has since published works on "The Court Society", "The Loneliness of the Dying", "Involvement and Detachment", "Time", "The Quest for Excitement" and many other titles including, in 1987, a volume of poetry. A study of Mozart (reviewed in RAVEN Vol. 9, No. 1, Spring 1996) has been published as have many of his essays. (Max Weber too published on the development of classical music as one of my former A Level students reminded me. It was on the A Level Music reading list).

Elias's study "The Civilising Process" traces the development of the civilising of manners and personality in Western Europe since the Middle Ages relating this to state formation and the monopolisation of power within states, an area of fundamental importance to anarchists and anarchist thinking. But in the process of the study's development Elias saw his approach as representing a radical rejection of the basic assumptions of conventional sociology, not only functionalism but marxism.

To me much anarchist writing on the state appears to be shallow and unsupported by historical evidence, although I expect some will try and refute this statement. Elias brings in a wealth of historical support material as evidence. In his study of court society he shows how courtly manners created an ideology of what was acceptable behaviour for various classes. Moral forms of restraints like table manners or defecating was an area of cultural development, neglected by Marx.

THE RELEVANCE OF FIGURATIONAL SOCIOLOGY

I have been making a study of the development of the British country house. It is interesting how changes in architecture in England and Wales came to allow for private life rather than public life, the installation of corridors - Versailles for instance has few - the (with)drawing room of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, netted curtains, frosted glass. Elias was however interested in long-term social processes.

- Now many would say 'But is this not the work of an historian?' And numerous historians have begun to look at this field but few looked at the context of long-term

processes of psychological development. What annoyed many of Elias's contemporaries was his insistence that there has been a long-term trend in the direction and make-up of European peoples. Changes in social structure are brought about by changes in individual personality structure. His claim that this cultural development was initially centred on court society and manners annoyed other researchers especially the marxists. But it must be remembered that, prior to the German unification following the Napoleonic Wars, Germany consisted of over two hundred states both large and small. For them the German language was vulgar. Civilisation meant civilite. A francophile version. The educated conversed in French as they did in many other parts of Europe such as Russia. Tolstoy's central character in "War and Peace" is called Pierre. It was the German intellectuals such as Goethe that developed Kulture, a native social form, Germanic rather than French.

CIVILISATION AND DE-CIVILISATION

For anarchists to understand state development and decline they must study the creation of civilisation and de-civilisation especially in smaller pre-modern societies (and here I do not mean the hunter-gatherer). In some ways some of the class struggle anarchists are right here, especially Class War, in developing a critical study of de-civilised groups.

Elias's early inspirational work at Leicester led to the creation of the study of the Sociology of sport especially spectator activity including the so-called football hooliganism. The concentration by the trotskysts and other marxists on trade union organisation as a means of overthrowing the state by the creation of class consciousness and the anarcho-syndicalists' concentration on workers' control fails to grasp the psychological process of understanding that ideology is national and international and not class-based, except in a few fairly closed working class communities - examples of these being pit villages, dockers, fishing towns and villages, etc. but not in the heterogeneous (occupationally mixed) urban developments within which many of us live. Class struggle is both out of date and, in many cases, merely fictional, an ideology to be learnt off by heart but not a picture of reality.

So-called *class action* is often reaction solely within an existing setting. Most western workers have been privatised and family-centred for generations. The traditional proletariat, so beloved of marxist writers and the so-called class anarchists is almost dead or more properly solely male, rather unfashionable today, except on British

TV soaps such as "East Enders" and "Coronation Street".

WHAT IS FIGURATIONAL SOCIOLOGY ABOUT?

Elias's notion of Figurational Sociology, or as he later came to call it Process Sociology is important. Reciprocity between peoples creates the figurations of social interaction.

"Figuration - Determination to a certain form; the resulting form; shape, outline; allegorical representation". (Concise Oxford Dictionary)

That is, how people relate to each other creates the kind of groups and societies they live in and the kind of morals which govern their lives. And this is much more than what might be learned in the workplace. It develops in unplanned ways. Conceptions such as groups or community refer to configurations of interdependent individuals.

Is this not what anarchists have been saying for years, using somewhat different language? The idea which comes over strongly from the marxists is that to understand a society we must understand its work systems and see how alienation develops.

For Elias, to understand a society and its cultural development we must look at what it calls culture and from this how it defines leisure and the effect this has on its personality. This is illustrated by a dance or a game hence Elias and his followers interest in football and crowd behaviour, which, if one thinks about it, govern our lives to a much greater degree than politics and political thought.

One may work during the week at an alienating job but one lives for the match, for the team and the sporting fixture. The preponderance of graffiti on the walls of North London with an A in a circle owes more to Arsenal than anarchism.

Elias is, in a sense, covering the area of thinking between that of anarchist communism and anarchist individualism saying what is important is not the collective or group or the individual ego but the figuration, the process. Anarchy is not a place but a process and may move in unexpected directions. In a sense much of anarchist thinking and action has reached an impasse. Yet most individualist anarchists of my acquaintance are perfectly happy to work with others on things of common interest. That is they work within the figuration on a basis of reciprocity. Many anarchist communists, especially the so-called class struggle anarchists, appear to wish to create an impasse, statements of aims and principles designed to armour themselves against heresy, very like the puritans and so blocking development, not enhancing it.

How may we interest future comrades and the mass of people sodden with media input not to condemn and attack us but go forward? What we need to do is pass on to a study of configurations (modes of arrangements). Elias later used the term Process Sociology instead of Figurational Sociology which is more intelligible to British audiences.

Soviet society, for instance, has fallen not least because it bored people to tears just as I believe marxism does and in any case, is not one of marxism's main problems its masculinity? It simply does not say anything to women. Even the traditional Russian communist concept of 'The New Soviet Man' when transferred to women made women into masculine figures. This is not what feminism is about. Feminism is about how women are. How they see themselves. Not another version of men. Equal but different. Self-expressive.

To have our ideas accepted, anarchists must offer a more interesting approach to people but not concentrated on 'the commune' or work but the interactive community and a leisure-based society. Free individuals within interactive groups. We must re-work the process of psychological development of personality to create appropriate structures. We may need to work to live but not live to work. The function of work is to enable sufficiency so we might have time to have social harmony and creative leisure. This process is what we were looking for all the time.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

Your views, comrades, would be appreciated. Meanwhile Elias has, I believe, much to offer anarchist thinking and action, not least in enabling us to understand its dynamics. What has saddened me is the great difficulty in getting Elias's views published in anarchist publications as they have much to offer anarchists. If sociologists tend to ignore anarchism it is perhaps because of its exponents' failure to be aware of new developments in sociological thinking and new approaches to social arrangements. Most sociologists see anarchism as archaic. I wonder why?

Peter Neville

NORBERT ELIAS WORKS INCLUDE:



The Civilising Process: Vol. 1 The History of Manners, 1939/1978, Vol. 2 State formation and Civilisation, 1939/1982

The Established and the Outsiders (with the late W. L. Scotson), 1965
The Court Society, 1969
The Loneliness of the Dying, 1985
Quest for Excitement in the Civilising Process (with Eric Dunning), 1986
Involvement and Detachment, 1987
The Symbol Theory, 1989
The Society of Individuals, 1991
Time: An Essay, 1992
Mozart 1993
The Germans, 1996
Other works, including Elias' poetry, are still in German.

The following is shortly to be published: Reflections on a Lifetime.

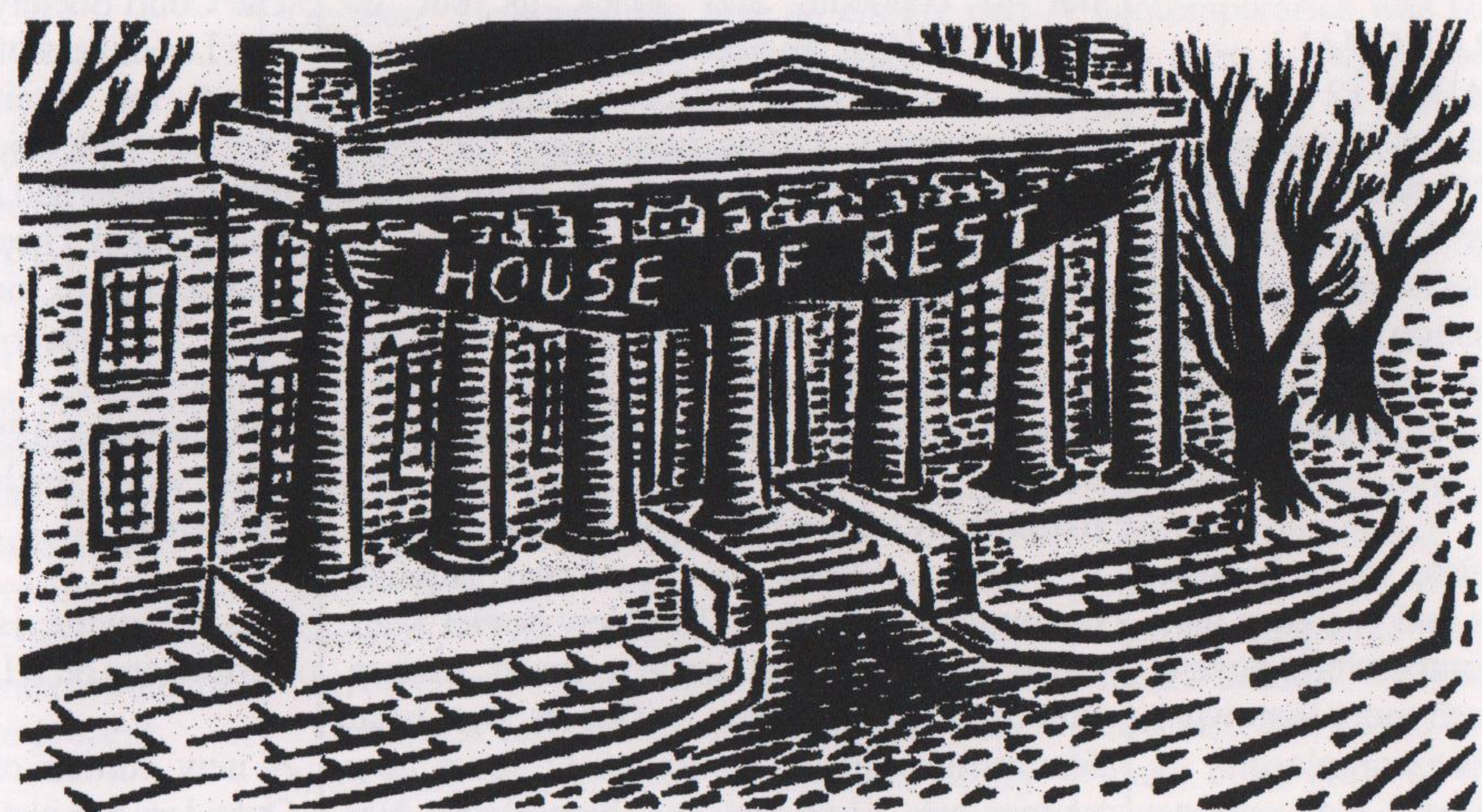
A new edition of The Established and the Outsiders has just been republished.

Works on Elias' ideas include:
Stephen Mennell, "Norbert Elias: Civilisation and the Human Self-Image" 1989 (published later in paperback with an addendum but sadly with a very short shelf life).
Johan Goudsblom & Stephen Mennell, "The Norbert Elias Reader", 1998.
Stephen Mennell & Johan Goudsblom, "Norbert Elias: On Civilisation, Power and Knowledge", 1998.
Robert van Krieken, "Norbert Elias", 1998.
Jonathan Fletcher, "Violence and Civilisation: An Introduction to the Works of Norbert Elias", 1997.

In order to understand some of the terminology may I direct the reader's attention to the following:
Nicholas Abercrombie et al, "The Penguin Dictionary of Sociology"; David Jary et al, "Collins Dictionary of Sociology" (both have recurrent editions).

The Norbert Elias foundation

The Norbert Elias Foundation was established in 1983 and publishes a newsletter: "Figurations". Details from the Editor, Stephen Mennell, Department of Sociology, University College Dublin, Dublin 4, Ireland. Researchers, institutes or libraries who wish to receive the newsletter should contact Judith van Rooyen, SISWO, Plantage Muidergracht 4, 1018 TV Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Fax #3120 6229430. Copies will be sent free of charge.



Post Modernist Anarchism - A Response to John Griffin

John Griffin's (no relation) article Pragmatic Anarchism in Total Liberty 3 raised a large number of important issues some of which I would like to respond to and enlarge on here.

John is right to highlight the paucity of anarchism's contribution to social theory and the need to modernise anarchist thinking (New Britain, New Anarchism, perhaps). In my own area of work as a trade union researcher, for instance, I have found next to no references to anarchism or anarchist writers in any sociology of work, labour economics, organisational behaviour or industrial relations books or journals I have read. This is despite the centrality of work and work place issues in anarchist discourse. It also contrasts sharply with Marxism which looms large in most theories of employment and even appears in the standard text book for personnel managers.

The lack of a distinct anarchist theory of employment relations highlights, I think, one of the reasons for anarchism's more general absence in social theory that John discusses. Anarchists rarely seem to have anything distinct to say (or, in some cases, anything to say at all, as John points out for economics). Despite the fact that classical anarchist writers, particularly Kropotkin, wrote extensively about the organisation of work under capitalism, the alienation caused by the division of labour and even criticised wage labour itself, most anarchists, in respect of work, have seemed content just to accept Marxist theories of class conflict and wage exploitation. While Marxism offers some valuable insights into what happens at certain places and types of work, (it is not, though, good at explaining public sector or

voluntary work, housework, the sex industry or why workers spend most of their time co-operating with their bosses for example), there seems to me to be much more that anarchism can say about work by basing its critique on power rather than just class conflict. Anarchism has to move out of the shadow of Marxism.

Some contemporary anarchists, (mainly from the primitivism or individual anarchist traditions), have moved away from Marxist theories of work and employment and developed much more radical critiques. Bob Black, for example, in *The Abolition of Work* questions the whole need to work. Because such approaches are novel they have had more impact (in this case mainly in the field of sociology).

What is true for the study of work is also true for other areas of social theory from economics to history. Perhaps, though, one of the problems we have is that anarchists cannot actually decide what anarchism is. Total Liberty 3 contained two definitions (on page 3 and 11). Unless there is some unity of view on this, libertarian theory will not even have a starting point. It seems to me that the core of anarchist thinking has to be opposition to the concentration of power and the exploitation that follows from this. The state is the most concentrated form of power in modern states (although it may be that global corporations are supplanting them). Class is one form of power concentration and exploitation, but only one amongst many (men/women, white/non white, human/non human animals, humans/nature etc.). The mistake we make is to debate endlessly which forms of power and exploitation is more important; what a waste of time! The

animal liberation movement in contrast has learnt to unite around common ground and goals.

Two other problems hinder anarchism's contribution to social theory. Firstly the actual number of anarchist influenced academics is minute. How many, can you name after Murray Bookchin and Noam Chomsky. I, for example, know of no other industrial relations academics or trade union researchers who are anarchists, (if you exist get in touch!) The final problem is the emphasis in the anarchist milieu on practice over theory. In some quarters this tends to get translated as anti intellectualism and protectionism. This is particularly prevalent in the class war end of the movement, (see the latest issue of Smash Hits, for example). Marxism learnt long ago the importance of praxis (theory and practice), and the New Left realised in the sixties the need to branch out beyond the industrial (male) working class. This does not mean that the working class is not important, just that anarchism needs to widen its perspective and not be so rooted in nineteenth century notions of class and society. In this respect post modernism, which John refers to critically, is relevant.

This is a large and complex area but it actually seems to me that anarchism is much more in tune with post modernist thinking than most other ideologies, and, as such, should be more relevant. Anarchism is largely a product of modernism and industrialisation, but, unlike other modernist ideologies such as Marxism (and capitalism, liberalism and fascism for that matter) anarchism does not place its faith in the big ideas ('meta narratives') of modernity: technological progress, specialism and

giantism (big industry, big cities, big shopping centres, mass media, mass parties, 'democracy' and so on). Anarchism generally opposes these and advocates decentralising power structures, dismantling hierarchies and encouraging local diversity and complexity- all very post modernist whether we like it or not.

Given the resonance between some aspects of anarchism and post modernism I find anarchists' general hostility to post modernism hard to understand. John criticises post modernism for its rejection of scientific method, preferring to rely on 'reason and logic'. It seems to me, though, that post modernism is right to point out that putting faith in 'big ideas' like scientific progress can get us well and truly stuck. Even science itself is beginning to reject the mechanical foundation on which scientific thinking has been based since Newton in favour of less certain theories such as chaos and complexity. What is reasonable and logical is relative, it changes.

I am not arguing that we should accept post modernism lock, stock and barrel. Some post modernist thinking is nonsense; however, rather than dismissing it so quickly as John and others do perhaps we should engage more with it, take from it and

contribute to it ideas that seem reasonable. Foucault has, for example, much to say to anarchists about why most people co-operate to maintain the system that exploits them and we would like overthrown.

One area of theory (and practice) that anarchism has made inroads into is environmental philosophy. This is not only because a number of anarchist writers, most notably Murray Bookchin, have addressed environmental issues but also because anarchist thinking offers credible explanations of how we have managed to get the planet in quite the mess it is at the moment and, crucially, what we can do about it. Theories such as social ecology or Peter Marshall's liberation ecology have something distinct to say and so get noticed. It is interesting that Marxism and Marxists have generally failed to make any impact on green thinking or on the green movement. If you ever meet a SWP member on a Reclaim The Streets action, for instance, they are generally, in my experience, rather lost - the concept of people, outside of the workplace, taking control of things themselves without leaders and (god forbid) having a good time, is a bit alien to them.

Ideas are important. They underpin change as the green movement shows. I certainly

agree with John that the language used in discussing theory needs to be clear and accessible. Practice is also important (from going on strike to organic gardening on an allotment). Anarchists have rightly pointed out that the future is being built in the present.

For anarchism to make more impact on social theory two things are needed. Firstly anarchism needs to rid itself of its Marxist roots and influence and develop a distinct perspective based, I would argue, on notions of power and exploitation. Secondly more anarchists need to try to contribute to debates outside the milieu. A good starting point for this might well be as Larry Gambone argues in TL3 agreeing a set of common principles that all anarchists can sign up to. Here's my contribution:

Anarchism

- Opposes all forms of hierarchy and the concentration of power
- Is against all forms of exploitation whether of humans, animals or nature
- Is for self organisation and mutual aid and co-operation
- Opposes government and the state

Richard Griffin

THE SOCIAL GENE and the survival of the fit enough - Evolution and Anarchism personally published by the writer Richard Frost.

We all have, probably, felt uneasy by Darwinism and survival of the fittest and its resulting justification for competition and capitalism, but to disagree seemed to imply the worse and dangerous theory of God creating man, as separate, in his own image and the denial of the integral link and interdependence of humankind with the rest of the world and the Universe. However we may also have heard about the disagreement of Kropotkin and his theory of mutual aid but this book at least for me is the definitive debunking of that 19th Century construct Darwinism; the Darwinism that was created in (and out of) the most blatantly vicious period of capitalism so applauded by Margaret Thatcher.

Here Richard Frost shows that far from contributing to evolution, survival of the fittest is conservative and thus would only create and preserve a simple cell in a niche and not create the diversity needed by evolution; it was co-operation of single cells into multi-celled beings which drove evolution and when two billion years later at

the Cambrian revolution, with more than sufficiency (an affluence of needs) the multi-various diversions of 'fit enough' which with scarcity and competition would have been killed off, multiplied and created the present life diversity, which led eventually to us: so co-operation and altruism are in our genes and are the real driving force of evolution! More than this the now seeming predominance of the selfish gene is encouraged by 'creating scarcity' and thus conservatism and competition which actually is against evolution, thus causing stagnation (or worse, the end of life?).

But this is only the beginning of this fascinating and I would say brilliant book, which is written in a form of blank verse. He says "it is not a poem; it just came out in short lines..." but for all that it is a very learned book with comprehensive references and notes. For instance he shows how it is unlikely that a gene is actually a particular piece of DNA but probably the interaction of many pieces that give the phenomena and can only be described as a gene by what it

does. It seems unlikely that a gene for an artistic, musical or craft bent, can actually be identified, so the social or selfish gene or social gene, is only the way that we behave because of our DNA in different circumstances.

He goes on to expand on his interpretations from this base to both criticise modern society and propose a new or at least different order of society and new ethics. I do not usually approve of the blurb on the back cover of books but this one says that if you take only one book into the next millennium then take this one - I would wholeheartedly agree with that!

Anyway if anyone wanted to try and get it in the local or college library, or order it through a bookshop, the number is:- ISBN 0 9534529 0 5 and Dick Frost is only charging £8.00 for it!

Peter M Le Mare. January 1999

Of Virtue... and Vice!

Following Jon Simcock's review of "The Origins of Virtue" by Matt Ridley in TL3. Here are some further thoughts and observations. Ridley's central theme is that human behaviour has a genetic basis. Few would disagree, but we are all aware of the way in which society shapes our thoughts and actions too, not to mention behaviour which comes about purely whimsically. Difficult, probably impossible to draw lines here, but placing more emphasis on genetic inheritance inevitably detracts from a great deal of established work in sociology, psychology and anthropology. We are back with the ongoing nature versus nurture argument.

Ridley spends little time with the previously mentioned disciplines - revealingly perhaps, *none* on psychology. He briefly discusses the apparent hoaxing of Margaret Mead over her anthropological work in Samoa, and sadly misrepresents current sociological thought when he says "The conventional wisdom in the social sciences is that *human nature* is simply an imprint of an individual's background and experience" (my emphasis). Even the most simplistic of the functionalists *did not* make instinctual characteristics coterminous with cultural attitudes absorbed through socialisation. Now, I admit to knowing little about socio-biology, but that put me on my guard as I read through the rest of the book, most of which develops around modern naturalists and biologists together with classical writers like Adam Smith, Hobbes, Malthus, Darwin, Huxley, and of course, Kropotkin.

With the current controversies around genetically modified crops, "Dolly the sheep", and cloned human tissue at the back

of our minds, we can be thankful that Ridley proposed social reforms rather than genetic remedies for our social woes. Implicit in this strategy of course lies Ridley's admission that regardless of genetic influences, social change is possible through the exercise of free will.

Most of us are aware from personal experience that amongst all those other behaviours, libertarian and authoritarian tendencies are enhanced or diminished according to social conditions. Expressions of love and reason versus those of coercion and competition, for instance, outline crucial social tensions. Forget all that flags and barricades stuff, these are the battlegrounds in the here and now where the social revolution, for the most part unknowingly, has been fought since human history first began. And yet we humans have often failed to restrain the tyrants around us.

We remain social beings, but our innate co-operative tendencies have been ruthlessly exploited and corrupted. We might reflect on how the Blairs of this world use the word "co-operate" as a friendly sounding synonym for "take it or leave it", or even "obey or else". People who are good co-operators, and in my view that is most of us, usually try to avoid conflict, but without some very firm collective "Nos!" here and there, the give and take of sociability has a perverse tendency to shade off through grudging acquiescence to wind up as abject submission. They squeeze us - we say, "well. OK" - they squeeze us a little more, and so all the way to Auschwitz. Now, Ridley sees the latter as an expression of our "instinct for genocidal tribalism (my emphasis). No one then was *responsible*; all

of *that* was just an unavoidable outbreak of that old "genocidal tribalism."

As I have pointed out, Ridley is inconsistent, but his ideas have an inevitable tendency towards determinism: "It's all in your genes" to me sounds like a more scientific version of "It's 'uman nature innit". These arguments have been used over and over again to whitewash all sorts of domatory and exploitative behaviour, and to fill advocates of individual freedom with feelings of impotence in the face of seemingly insuperable odds. On the other hand, more rose-tinted views of human behaviour, stemming mainly from Kropotkin, have encouraged a degree of determinism even in anarchist ideas, and again the effect, in my estimation has been to discourage critical reasoned argument.

It now seems to be possible not only to clone human beings (it's been done in South Korea), but also to genetically modify human embryos. These developments open up a range of dark possibilities until now exploited only by the writers of science fiction - one can't help wondering if the state funded researchers are trying to isolate a gene which controls obedience...

Whatever our genetic make-up and accepting, horror of horrors, that it may be consciously selected, we can still change our lives by behaving differently. Plenty of contact in a cohesive community is the surest way of encouraging our virtues and keeping our vices in check.

John Griffin.

Chomsky's Statism: An Anarchism for the Next Millennium? by Joe Peacott

Noam Chomsky is seen by many as one of the more prominent anarchists in the United States. But, many times in the last several years he has come out publicly in favor of strengthening the federal government. Moreover, he argues that there is no contradiction between this stance and his advocacy of a stateless future. Such a position is in direct conflict with the

traditional anarchist insight that means inevitably influence (and frequently corrupt or totally derail) intended ends, and deserves examination and rebuttal.

Chomsky bases his support for the federal government on his contention that private power wielded by corporations is much more dangerous to people than state action, and that government can, and should, protect its

defenseless citizens against the depredations of the capitalists. While the power of private corporations in the United States is truly awesome and oppressive, this power exists because these businesses are supported by the state, a point that Chomsky concedes. Anarchists have generally opposed the state for precisely this reason: that it protects the interests of some, primarily the wealthy

exploiters, while preventing others, especially working people, from challenging this power on their own. But, because of poor and working people's movements, the state has instituted some social welfare programs and instituted some regulation of private business to ameliorate the conditions of those most harmed by state-supported capitalism. These and other alleged public services are the aspects of government power that Chomsky supports and would see expanded.

Chomsky further argues that the state is the only form of illegitimate power in which people have a real chance to participate. Besides the question of whether it is moral for people to participate in the exercise of this illegitimate power, he doesn't make a very convincing argument for his contention. In one interview he states that the pentagon budget is going up, while the population oppose this by a 6 to 1 ratio. In another article he says that government regulatory mechanisms are very weak, and mostly controlled by the corporations anyway. He even quotes a poll in one of his interviews to the effect that 82% of Americans feel the state is not run in the interests of the people. Nowhere does he back up his claim that government is or has been open to popular participation in any meaningful sense.

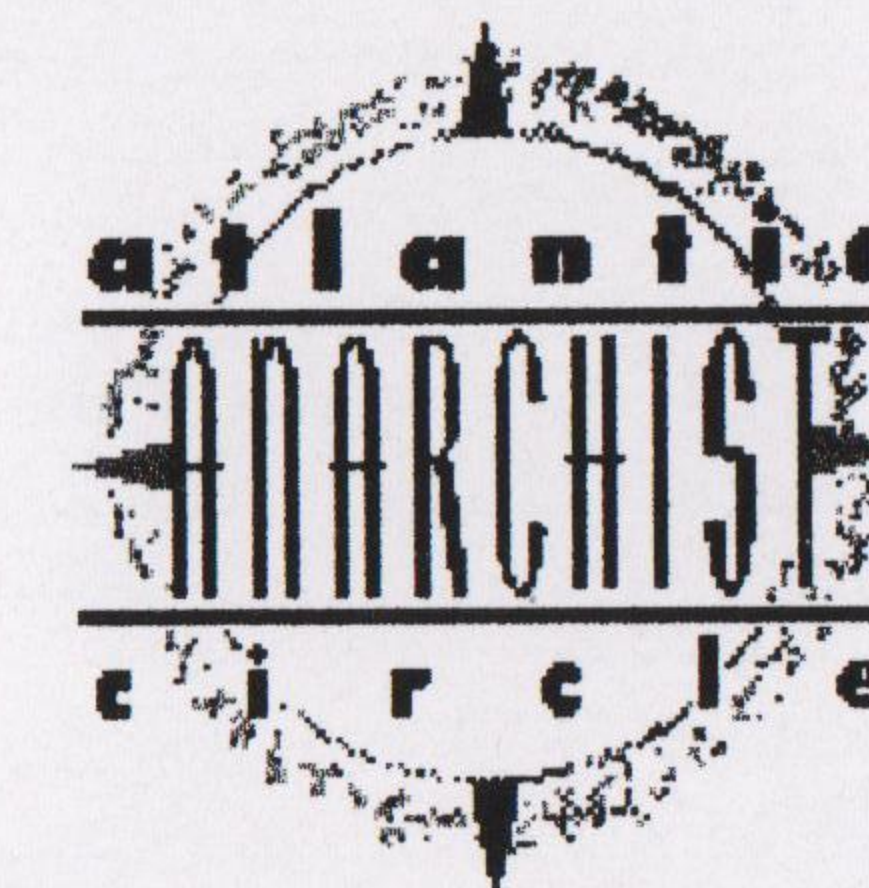
Governments have been influenced by popular pressure, however. The anti-war movement made it impossible for the military to use nuclear weapons in south-east Asia, thereby preventing a United States conquest of Vietnam. Anti-racist activists in the sixties and seventies pressured governments at all levels to eradicate racist laws and practices and brought about the end of most legal segregation. But these are not examples of people participating in government. Instead these are instances of outsiders (which regular people will always be vis-a-vis the state) bringing pressure on an evil institution to change its ways.

Such measures can also bring about change in private institutions as well. The labor movement brought about changes using pressure tactics such as strikes and sabotage against private businesses, and activists have assisted workers with boycotts and public actions directed at corporations as well. While it may be easier in some settings to win concessions from government because individual politicians wish to be elected in the sham of elections, people acting for themselves can often accomplish great things on their own in both the public and private arenas.

Government is a package. The welfare state is also the warfare state, and, while Chomsky criticizes the federal government's support of prisons and corporations, he thinks government can protect people from

prisons and corporations. He says that people can participate in government, but complains that it is not under popular influence. Government is force and should be done away with. People can act for themselves and take care of themselves. That is the anarchist attitude to the state, and Chomsky rejects it.

In fact, he is troubled that people might hate or fear the government. He admits that the state steals from poor people to subsidize wealthy people, but he thinks discussions about whether the government can be trusted to care for poor people are irrelevant. He dismisses as far-right the rejection of public schools. He feels that when people feel disillusioned about power, they turn to



"irrational" alternatives. He arrogantly states that those who think there is a contradiction in supporting centralized state power even though one opposes it "just aren't thinking very clearly."

Chomsky seems not to be able to envision any means of offsetting the power of private tyrannies other than increasing the power of public tyrannies. Chomsky speaks glowingly of the efforts of poor people in places such as Haiti. "Poor people, people in the slums, peasants in the hills, managed to create out of their own activity a very lively, vibrant civil society with grass-roots movements and associations and unions and ideals and commitments and hopes and enthusiasm and so on which was astonishing in scale, so much so that without any resources they were able to take over the political system." He seems to see their assumption of state power as a victory, unable to envision that people this resourceful could continue to function quite nicely without a government. And people are this resourceful, both in Haiti and the United States, and this is where anarchists get their inspiration.

Even Barbara Ehrenreich, a social democrat, and, with Chomsky, a member of the New Party, can countenance non-statist solutions to working and poor people's problems. As she says, "[W]e can no longer allow ourselves to be seen as cheerleaders for government activism...We need to emphasize strategies and approaches that do

not depend on the existing government, that in fact bypass it as irrelevant or downright obstructionist." She then goes on to mention organizing the unorganized, citizen initiatives against corporate abuses, and non-governmental self-help projects in the tradition of the feminist health centers of the 70s. In addition, she sees the state as a clear enemy in its erosion of civil liberties and the growth of the punishment industry. She calls her approach "progressive libertarianism." Such an outlook is closer to an anarchist one than is Chomsky's.

Unlike Chomsky, many rightly see that government schools educate badly, government welfare does not serve poor people well, and government action is largely against the interests of regular people. He is right that private corporations are not in the business of being humanitarian, but neither is the state. Instead of criticizing and fearing this anti-government feeling, we should encourage it and seek to extend it to all areas of government, including the military, police, and taxes.

Private corporate power exists only because it is protected by the state. Government reduces competition and limits entry into the market place with various licensing and regulatory schemes, and grants monopolies and subsidies to favored businesses. Chomsky himself concedes that corporations would not be successful if forced to submit to market discipline, and that markets are under attack. But in addition to actively promoting concentration of private corporate power, the government prevents people from defending their own interests in disputes with corporations with its police powers and laws that disarm working people. Such disempowerment of people makes them unable to resist the power of public institutions as well, allowing the state to tax, regulate, and imprison people at its whim. Abolishing state power is a more effective and libertarian method of limiting private and public tyranny than is increasing the scope of the federal government. Only anarchist means have any hope of producing anarchist ends.

