

excellent and informed publication that details Immigration, Europe, the law, Military, Northern Ireland, policing, Racism & Fascism, Prisons, Security & Intelligence and has a number of feature articles. If you wish to be informed rather than limited to the pap produced by the daily press it's the magazine for you. Back issues are available plus a number of publications and access to it on the Internet.

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Peter Neville



Letters

Dear Total Liberty

In my article *Norbert Elias: Civilisation and De-civilisation* (Total Liberty Volume One, No.4 Spring 1999) I made a factual error in the sixth paragraph. I said "Mannheim was a close associate of Elias at the otherwise Marxist Institute for Social Research in the pre-Nazi Germany University of Frankfurt". As Stephen Mennell points out on page 14 of his book 'Norbert Elias: Civilisation and the Human Self-Image' "The Department of Sociology at the University of Frankfurt was housed on the ground floor of the famous *Institut für Sozialforschung*." In

fact it was not part of the Institute. The University merely rented rooms from the Institute which were occupied by its Sociology Department. There was otherwise no connection although Elias was friendly with some of the Institute's staff especially Adorno.

Stephen Mennell's book has just been re-published and is obtainable from the University College of Dublin Press, Newman House, St. Stephen's green, Dublin 2, Ireland, ISBN 1 900621 20 7. This edition has, in addition, an Afterword which does not appear in the hardback edition.

Yours

Peter Neville

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

Red Rambles

Autumn Programme

For Libertarians, Socialists, Greens and Anarchists.

Sunday 31st October

Vale of Belvoir. Walk leader Ray (meet at the John Storer House car park, Wards End, Loughborough at 10am)

Yours

Sunday 28th November

Derbyshire Walk. Meet at Wirksworth Market Place, near Cromford, Derbyshire at 11am. Walk to Alport heights. 5 miles. Walk leader John.

Sunday 19th December

Woodthorpe, Beacon Hill, Windmill Hill. Walk leader Mike (meet at the Loughborough Crematorium car park at 10am)

A rota of cars will be used. Full cars will travel to walks. For more information call Vivienne, 01509 230131 work 01509 236028 home. Bring food, drink, suitable footwear and waterproof clothing.



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Total Liberty

A Journal of Evolutionary Anarchism

Volume 2

Number 1

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Editorial

Subscribers and regular readers of Total Liberty may notice a change to the sub heading on Total Liberty's title banner with this present edition. This now reads Total Liberty: A Journal of Evolutionary Anarchism. I have made this change not because of any alteration in my own Anarchist principles, nor because of any take-over of the journal by any other group or individual, but because the definition more closely defines my own position.

Why then Evolutionary Anarchism? I am aware, and accept that revolutions have happened and may continue to happen within the history, including the modern history, of humanity, but I am not an advocate of violent revolution, and there are now many Anarchists who share this view in practice. Many express it by stating that they oppose violence as a means. Larry Gambone, for example, in his recent pamphlet *Toward Post Modern Anarchism* states '...Violent revolution is finished as an option (if it ever was one), a result of urbanisation and an ever growing interdependence...' Whilst the Canadian Anarchist Journal *Kick It Over* says in its What we Believe section '...for us revolution is more a process than an event - a process

rooted in the radicalisation of individuals and the transformation of everyday life...' Today many Anarchists have come to perceive that through the course of recorded history popular revolutions have tended to end in civil war, butchery and mass slaughter. The Russian Revolution of 1917 and the Spanish Revolution of 1936 are obvious examples of this, but there are many others. Even those revolutions which have 'succeeded' have tended to impose centralised, authoritarian Marxist regimes rather than create Anarchist utopias.

The Spanish Revolution is often quoted by Anarchists as an example of Anarchist ideas in action. There is some truth in this. However, there is much greater evidence of un-anarchistic actions, glaring contradictions and problems within the Anarchist movements and its achievements and actions in Spain during 1936-1939 not recounted by many of the Anarchist accounts of this period, too many of which view the events through rose tinted, or should one say, red and black tinted spectacles. Ronald Fraser's magnum opus *The Blood of Spain*, published by Pimlico, is an oral history of the events citing witnesses from all sections of society and a wide variety of actors in these events. It makes a moving and eye-opening description which should be on the reading list of any serious

Anarchist. It is a useful corrective to the usual propagandistic accounts.

In any event no revolution has established a free, egalitarian and open society consistent with Anarchist principles. It was Gustav Landauer, himself a victim of the violence unleashed by reactionary *freikorps* troops fighting against the Bavarian Council Revolution of 1919, who said "*The State is a condition, a certain relationship between human beings, a mode of human behaviour; we destroy it by contracting other relationships, by behaving differently.*"

I have long believed the most effective, open, and ethical way to work for the establishment of an Anarchist Society is to support social movements achieving real grass roots change. Such things as Worker Co-operatives, Housing Co-operatives, self-employment, LETS schemes, Alternative Currencies,

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Mutual Banking, Credit Unions, tenants committees, Food Co-operatives, Allotments, voluntary organisations, peaceful protest and non-violent direct action and a host of similar activities are the means by which people begin to "behave differently", to go beyond Anarchist theory, and begin to build the elements of a new society. This is what I believe comprises the active element of an Evolutionary

Anarchism. Not violence, not violent revolution, but positive constructive activity with the achievable aim of creating real and practical alternatives and the longer term purpose of creating a free society.

In support of this strategy Total Liberty will continue to feature articles reflecting both theory and practice from a wide range of Anarchist opinion including

Individualist Anarchists, Social Anarchists, Green Anarchists, Anarcho-Syndicalists, Anarcho-Pacifists. The journal will continue to be published on an occasional basis, though the long term aim is, funds permitting, to publish on a quarterly basis. JPS

"Anarchism is not a repudiation of social discipline, but rather an assumption of humanitarian responsibility
Scholem Asch

EVERYBODY IS AN ANARCHIST

Many people, anarchist or not, will consider the title of this article to be ridiculous. If it were true, they would say, we would be living in an anarchist society.

However, if anarchists believe that anarchy is the natural way of life, the order of things, then unlike some artificial culture, it has to lie dormant in each and every human being. As Kropotkin wrote "an anarchist merely considers society as an aggregation of organisms trying to find out the best ways of combining the wants of the individual with those of co-operation for the welfare of the species." Government and the system has hijacked the wants and needs of the individual and twisted them into a means of control and dependence. This article seeks to show that despite this, anarchism inhabits everyone and that even those who would not consider themselves to be anarchists and those who would be horrified by such a suggestion are, in some way, exhibiting the traits of anarchism.

Let's look at an example. Beneath York Minster there is a stream. Over 20 years ago, the cathedral foundations were found to be crumbling and as part of a giant shoring-up exercise, excavations were carried out. Amongst the finds was a stream culverted by the Romans, still running and tripping over the stones laid 2,000 ago. Go any time to the undercroft and you can still see it. The stream is at the base of the

Minster's existence: the Romans could not stop it up, fill it in or dry it out - they could only seek to enclose it whilst acknowledging that it would continue to flow. The stream is the only natural thing in a gigantic edifice which is an architecturally magnificent, beautifully constructed, superfluity.

Just as the stream was overlaid with the dead stonework, built at a human cost we will never know, we are



likewise overlaid with the years and depth of cultural concrete, designed to repress the individual's stream into a conforming monolith of a person. The edifice of culture and government has grown up around the individual, leading people to believe they have freedom and choice when in fact they have been goaded and manipulated into internalizing the dominant culture.

The indoctrination of a person begins early. Before I was even conceived, I was organized by government. My parents were obliged to conform to a rigid legal ceremony which effectively obliged them to stay together, whether they turned out to be suited or not. My conception then developed in an artificial state between two people and my pre-birth state was again prescribed by government as my mother went through all the accepted antenatal classes, vitamin consumption etc.

At school, the brain-washing continued to make me into a further subservient creature, mouthing the Lord's prayer, the alphabet and the national anthem, being forced to join in with government and church ordained ceremonies of Christmas etc. None of this was done with any explanation as to why. I was to accept it without question. I could, of course, make some limited queries, but not to any point where I might threaten or undermine the norm. But I had to attend such schooling. The law effectively made it an offence for me not to learn. The indoctrination was such that I was made to be controlled by the masters, to control myself with the brain-washing that all I had learnt must be right and to control others by disputing any attempt at dissent and upholding the system's punishments of those who did not conform.

Like the magnificent and visually beautiful structure of the Minster, the

system then coats us with promises of how wonderful the structure is, it holds out its prizes of high salaries, comfortable living and food aplenty. Anybody who wants to interfere with this beautiful building, is a destroyer, seeking to undermine the individual stream which this glorious edifice is protecting. Of course, anarchists know that this rubbish, but the majority of people are so much part of - and dependant upon - the structure that they fear challenging it, even where they find it is wrong, because they believe that if it crumbles, it leaves them like abandoned animals - domesticated but bewildered and frightened without their masters.

The system therefore relies on the fear it has bred in each person - the fear of social exclusion and/or punishment. Government effectively severs us from our fellows and in the fractures between otherwise co-operative people, it injects the concrete of competition, rivalry and adherence to itself rather than to other human beings. Left in their natural state people would form co-operative units resolving any conflict by mutual co-operation. By placing people in fear, by dividing them from their neighbours, government can control them.

Anarchists have broken away from this indoctrination. The phrase "broken away" is used advisedly because we still carry the scars or the remnants of the chains in our own daily lives. Anarchists know what the system is all about, but still have to interact with it. Most, to varying degrees, will still pay taxes, have mortgages, draw benefits or shop in the large retailers.

The question may then follow: if anarchists have reached the stage of enlightenment, even whilst having to operate within the system, why have others not done the same if they are also anarchists? Sometimes the overarching edifice imposed on some people has made them too frightened to question their environment or some are exercising so much power and control that they feel no need to question their lives. However, we should be looking more closely at the daily working of people's lives. It is there, amongst the thousand and one actions which make up a daily life that we will find the traits of anarchism. Anarchists have had a tendency to intellectualize life or to

comment on the major issues of the day and not see the prosaic, the ordinary.

Look at a simple example: an old lady falls over in the street with her heavy shopping and cannot get up. Some people will pass her by but the majority will stop and show concern in a variety of ways: some will actively help her to her feet or see what she needs whilst others, not taking an active part, will feel concern for her and ask if she is all right. There is no compulsion on anyone to help that old lady. If people walk by and ignore her, the government will not sanction them for it. Even though they may have gone against the moral code of "being a good citizen" (which in essence means doing everything government tells them without question), the system will not interfere. So what does make people stop and help? I suggest it is the stream of anarchism. But try telling the helper



they have just exercised anarchism and they would be horrified!

Those who go to the old lady's aid may grumble at the lack of services to assist her in shopping, why she has no local community shops etc. but as they have been taught, they are unlikely to do anything about it. If they express disquiet, this may stretch no further than a letter to the local press or even, voting for another party at the next election. The fact that voting merely encourages such behaviour does not occur to them.

Basically, the system has had to warp and manipulate the principles of anarchism to prevent constant instability as a result of its own mechanisms. The Kosovo crisis is an example. Consider in this situation how the system, by its barbaric actions, seeks to use and warp anarchist principles of giving mutual aid to humanity by the voluntary co-operation

of the NATO peoples to relieve the suffering of others. Looks good on paper, doesn't it? No mention, of course, of all the vested interests of capitalism lurking in the background, none of which is likely to give any thought to the individual in Kosovo except to the extent that they can be used to further the cause of profit. No mention, of course, of the horrendous "ethnic cleansing" of the native peoples by the United States government!

From this, government draws on the basic humanity of the individual to provide the charity: the food, clothing etc. This allows people to express their own feelings of aid and co-operation but, through the gung-ho manipulation, empty rhetoric and the basic indoctrination, without any real understanding or challenge to government.

The system has also been clever in undermining the dissenting groups. It has managed to prevent many groups from being little more than a protesting lobby. Look at the trade union movement. This has been absorbed so much into the Labour Party that its revolutionary zeal has perished. The basic concerns for the workers are no longer pursued beyond minimal protest at the annual wage round. And look at anarchy's portrayal: we are seen as bomb-throwing loonies, intent on creating chaos and destruction. Even the word "anarchy" has become synonymous with chaos when it is governments which cause chaos and needless destruction.

One of the most anarchistic people I have ever met is Tommy, an elderly man, very intelligent but with limited education. He can barely read or write, he had various labouring jobs in his working life and now he and his wife live off their pension and other state handouts. The system has no time for him: he'll never be honoured with a *gong*; his lifestyle won't feature in the Sunday supplements; no TV celebrity will invite him to their birthday bashes; no limousines wait to take him to town. But he will run errands for others (despite having arthritis), watch for their homes and animals when they are away. He will do bartering for chopping logs or small gardening tasks. He takes it upon himself to clear the litter from his village and he is on the

committee of his local Working Men's Club. He does not judge others by their appearances, large houses, bank balances or accents. He has had squabbles with his neighbours but he was there helping out when their home was flooded. Other people know he can be relied on and he commands much respect and affection in his neighbourhood. To earn his respect requires greater effort than the gee-gaws of society and it is a privilege to do so. In short, he is a fine human being exhibiting many of the best traits of anarchism. But try telling him that. He has been conditioned to believe he is unsuccessful because he does not have the trappings of "success".

You will all know someone like Tommy. He believes it is his "lot" to be at the bottom of society's heap. It is this amazing ability of the indoctrination to

make people blame themselves for government's clog on their ability to achieve their maximum potential. How many would-be Shelleys, Kropotkins, Wildes, curers of disease have been crushed by such indoctrination, coupled with accident of birth?

An old saying states that to know the truth you have to look beyond your limits. Perhaps this should be expressed as to know the truth is to look beyond the limits imposed upon you and it is at that level that we should be reaching out to the Tommys of this world. If we can persuade him that anarchism is not some cataclysmic black hole but rather a reflection of his current ways of life, then we are striking at a true grass roots level, the strength of which should not be underestimated. If we can persuade people not to fear anarchism, it would be a start.

Even Machiavelli recognised the basic tenets which run through life. He said, "the texture of history never changes: human values and virtues remain the same". Herbert Read saw it as "the anarchy of Life in the midst of the Order of Living". It was said that no-one living next door to Kropotkin in London would have known he was an anarchist - he was living an "ordinary", apparently middle-class lifestyle.

Finally, I have to believe everyone is an anarchist. If not, then anarchists must surely be just another controlling group, seeking to replace one pile of pointless junk with another over the stream of individuality. The stream can run perfectly well on its own route.

Jean Pollard.

Wherein does Wrongness Lie? by Wendy McElroy

Any theory of natural rights implies that there are natural wrongs. Benjamin Tucker, editor of the touchstone 19th century individualist anarchist periodical *Liberty* cared passionately about what was wrong. Indeed, one of Tucker's overriding concerns throughout *Liberty* was to discover and to express a clear answer to the question, 'what is wrong?'

On the second page of the first issue of *Liberty*, Tucker published an article entitled "The Anatomy of Liberty" which he began with the words, "Nine-tenths of life is spent in complaining of wrongs and trying to abolish them." Yet he concluded that not one in a hundred reformers were able to define what 'wrong' essentially was. Without a definition of the essential nature of 'wrongness', even well intentioned reformers were likely to become muddled and harm liberty instead of furthering it. Otherwise stated, if the goal of reform was to construct social structures that promoted the well-being of human beings, then it was necessary

to have a precise understanding of what constituted such well-being.

Tucker stated the usual sense in



which the word 'wrong' had been used politically, "The average standard of condemning a thing as wrong is that it works injustice to some class of individuals." He rejected this definition

as scientifically without basis because, - "[f]or the class that is injured perhaps a much larger class is benefited by the social practice complained of".

Without a clear answer to the question 'what is wrong?', the bulk of reforms were doomed to be nothing more than expressions of class warfare -- that is, one class within society enriching itself at the expense of another.

Analyzing society through a strictly individualist lens, Tucker rejected the possibility of class benefits. He contended that all wrongs were committed against individuals, not against abstract categories of people:

"There are no class rights or class wrongs. A thing is right, now and forever, because it accords with the immutable law of our being. It is wrong, now and forever, because it is opposed to that law. What is that law as it pertains to human relations? is the problem of Liberty.... The law of liberty is spontaneous association by natural selection. The first condition of its

normal operation is that the basic factor of social existence, the individual, shall be let entirely and absolutely free to regulate his life as experimental contact with other equally free individuals may seem to direct "[Emphasis in original] (1).

Tucker's statement of right being based on the 'immutable law' of human nature that should be equally applied to all human beings placed him solidly within the Natural Law tradition. When asked his position on law and order, the younger Tucker answered: "Law! yes: but what law? The law of nature as developed out of a rational analysis of social force and based upon the sovereignty of the individual, or some law manufactured for designing ends before we were born and without our consent? As brave old Lysander Spooner says, it is absurd to talk about 'making' laws. Laws are, and the only right of a human being is to search after them and obey them for himself, leaving others to do the same, or contrariwise, at their own cost." (2).

Tucker's commitment to Natural Law and to the fundamental question, 'what is wrong', was reiterated in an article entitled "The Philosophy of Right and Wrong". Here Tucker wrote, "the very first step in all reasoning looking to human well-being is to fix upon a correct scientific basis of right and wrong." Although he declared himself to 'very positive' of the natural rights basis of right and wrong, Tucker added a comment that presaged what would become *Liberty's* most explosive and destructive debate. He declared, "but we are fallible, and, if the history of human opinions teaches anything, it is that nothing in this world is a finality." (3).

From June 30, 1885 to May 1, 1886, *Liberty* introduced in serial form a classic work of natural rights literature: "A Letter to Grover Cleveland: on His False, Absurd, Self-Contradictory, and Inaugural Address", by Spooner. During this period, regular contributors, such as Lloyd, felt free to proclaim with out fear of contradiction, "Only to natural law is the free man responsible, and in his obedience to that law does his liberty consist..." (4).

By late 1886, Tucker had abandoned Natural Law for an ideology called 'philosophical egoism,' which

considered natural rights to be 'myths', 'ghosts' in the mind: it defined 'right' as might. Tucker seemed to take easily to philosophical egoism, perhaps because the way it fits neatly into at least one aspect of the Sovereignty of the Individual principle espoused by his mentor Warren -- that is, the appeal to enlightened self-interest.

Although Warren had maintained a Natural Law perspective, he had rejected altruism as a realistic basis for human action. Egoism must have sounded familiar to Tucker. The debate that publicly ushered in his conversion was sparked by Max Stirner's pivotal work on law, property, and the State, which was entitled *The Ego and His Own* (in German, *Der Einzige und Sein Eigentum*). (5). Stirner, whose real name was Johann Kaspar Schmidt, had published *Der Einzige* in German in 1845 to a widespread but short lived acclaim. (6). Although every aspect of 'Stirnerite egoism' stirred argument in radical circles, the claim that 'right was might' became the most controversial. Whatever a man had the might to do, Stirner claimed he also had the right to do.

As for traditional concepts of good and evil, the enlightened egoist realized that these were merely words with no reality behind them. Stirner wrote: "The divine is God's concern; the human, man's. My concern is neither the divine nor the human, not the true, good, just, free, etc., solely what is mine, and it is not a general one, but is -- unique, as I am unique. Nothing is more to me than myself!" (7).

Philosophical anarchism proclaimed that the acting individual and no one else should be the beneficiary of his own actions. A man's own welfare should be his highest value, and the only 'law' he respected. All other laws devolved to nothing more than orders issued by those who were in a position of might - artificial orders that had no authority to bind the self-enlightened individual. Such an individual had no responsibility but self-enjoyment.

Applying his theory directly to the concept of natural rights, Stirner observed: "Who can ask about 'right' if he is not occupying the religious standpoint just like other people? Is not 'right' a religious concept, i.e. something sacred... When Revolution

stamped liberty as a 'right' it took refuge in the religious sphere, in the region of the sacred." (8).

Thus, with Stirnerite egoism came the rejection of right and wrong -- indeed, the rejection of any obligation whatsoever -- except as the individual voluntarily assumed it by subordinating his will to a contract. Even then, the egoist respected a contract only because establishing reciprocity with fellow human beings was in his enlightened self interest. The act of contracting became the pivotal point in the egoistic social theory: through contract human beings voluntarily relinquished might (or their will) in favor of obligations to others. Society by rights was replaced with 'society by contract' -- a phrase favored by Tucker.

The conversion to philosophical egoism seemed to fill Tucker with social optimism. He wrote, "Mankind is approaching the real social contract, which is not, as Rousseau thought, the origin of society, but rather the outcome of a long social experience, the fruit of its follies and disasters. It is obvious that this contract, this social law, developed to its perfection, excludes all aggression, all violation of equality of liberty, all invasion of every kind" (9).

In the late 1880s, interest in Stirner among American intellectuals had been stirred by the translations and popularization of his works that had offered by *Liberty* contributors the newspaperman J.L. Walker, the egoistic anarchist Steven T. Byington (10), and John Beverly Robinson, a publisher of the land reform periodical *The Free Soiler*. Walker had independently worked out the principles of egoism for himself some years before reading Stirner and, then, he was amazed to discover the remarkable similarities. Walker published the first twelve chapters of his pioneering work, *Philosophy of Egoism*, in the May 1890 to September 1891 issues of *Egoism* (11). Even before this series appeared, however, *Liberty* had introduced egoism through a number of articles by Walker and George Schumm, a close associate of Tucker.

The American interest in Stirner constituted a rebirth for his philosophy. As Tucker explained in the Publisher's Preface of the 1907 edition of *The Ego*

and His Own: "The memory of Max Stirner had been virtually extinct for an entire generation. But in the last two decades there has been a remarkable revival of interest both in the book and in its author. It began in this country with a discussion in the pages of the Anarchist periodical, Liberty, in which Stirner's thought was clearly expounded and vigorously championed by Dr. James L. Walker, who adopted for this discussion the pseudonym Tak Kak."

Footnotes

- 1.) "The Anatomy of Liberty" in Liberty I (August 6, 1881) p.2.
- 2.) "Liberty the Mother of Order" in Liberty I (October 12, 1882)
- 3.) "The Philosophy of Right and Wrong" in Liberty I (October 29, 1881) p.2.
- 4.) "Anarchy and reform" in Liberty III (September 12, 1885) p.7.
- 5.) The Ego and His Own was published in an English translation by Steven T. Byington in 1907. Before then, much

of American egoism was based on the secondary material produced by radicals who read German.

- 6.) Not all readers praised Stirner, of course. Among his critics were Ludwig Feuerbach, Moses Hess, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. Marx considered the Stirnerite 'self' -- a supreme and fundamental selfhood existing independently-- to be an absurdity. Marx, who later dubbed Stirner 'St.Max', believed the 'self' existed only as an abstraction derived from the complex interrelationship of 'selves' known as society. Marx's critique of Stirner first appeared in The German Ideology, Part II, co-authored with Engels.
- 7.) As quoted in Peter Marshall, Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism, p.227.
- 8.) As quoted in Eltzbacher, Anarchism p.65.
- 9.) Liberty VIII (May 16, 1891) 1.
- 10.) Some ambiguity exists about the spelling of Byington's name. It sometimes appears within Liberty as

'Steven' and certain secondary sources favour this spelling, but, at other times, Liberty lists him as 'Stephen'. For example, the article "Marriage and kindred Contracts" in Liberty XIV (December, 1900) 2-3

- 11.) Egoism (1890-1897), edited by Georgia and Henry Replegle from California, was also a significant vehicle of Stirnerite philosophy. Egoism had considerable influence upon Tucker. When Tucker agreed with the natural rights position of J. Greevz Fisher on children, its editor, Henry Replegle (under the pseudonym of "H") rushed to correct him. "H" very properly takes me to task," Tucker commented in Liberty XI (June 29, 1895):3. Tucker changed his position to conform with this criticism. The Philosophy of Egoism was eventually published in 1905.

Two reviews of: The Wrong Kind Of Money by Emily Jane.

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Review No.1

The monopoly over the money supply exercised by various governments today produces many problems for working people. It results in the ability of banks to charge interest, one of the major means by which people are unjustly separated from a portion of their wealth, as well as a shortage of credit which prevents many people from obtaining the means with which to better their living conditions. Anarchists have criticised this institution for many years and have come up with various schemes to remedy the problem. Some believe in abolishing money completely, seeing it as unnecessary in a future, communist anarchist society. Others, who envision a non-communist anarchist future, believe people will continue to need a means of exchange, even in a different, anti-authoritarian world, and have been

writing about and discussing, as well as experimenting with, non-monopoly, non-governmental currencies or credit systems, for well over a hundred years. Proudhon proposed a bank of the people, William B Greene wrote of mutual banking, and Josiah Warren and his associates experimented with labour notes.

Emily Jane's book, The Wrong Kind of Money, is a new contribution to this discussion. In this book, the author presents a critique of current forms of money and proposes a new form that does not produce the same kinds of problems as the conventional sort. While much of this book is worthwhile, the picture drawn of how the alternative money system would work seems to me quite unrealistic and problematic. The book's strength is in the first part, where Jane presents a brief history of

money and exposes the inner workings of the banking system. She explains the labour theory of value, the harmfulness of interest to economic life, the trickery where, by shuffling paper money back and forth, more money, but no more real wealth, is created. She shows how the conventional money system, whether based on paper or precious metals, causes a shortage of money and credit, promotes usurious interest charges, impedes economic development, and impoverishes productive working people, while enriching non-productive bankers, financiers, and their various hangers-on.

The solution proposed by the author to remedy this situation is what she calls "local money." Neighbours or fellow-townspersons would exchange goods and services without the

exchange of conventional government money. There would be an accounting office of sorts that would record transactions between members of the system, each credit to one member producing a debit for another member, producing a perpetual "balance" in the system as a whole of zero. It matters not to the author whether one has a huge debt or tons of credits, since the balance is always zero and no one is the worse for it. No paper currency would be issued, and, apparently, the system would be open to all comers, with Jane envisioning even a continental system based on the same principles. This system bears some resemblance to the LETS schemes discussed by Jonathan Simcock in the last issue of TL. But Jane's proposal contains a number of problematic features, which would likely doom such an experiment to failure. One is the problem of free-riders, those who constantly accumulate debts and rarely if ever gain credits. Jane feels that there should be no stigma attached to being a free-rider, and that for most of them this would be a temporary phase. This is inconsistent with most people's experience, that tolerating parasitism merely encourages it. Surely some productive people will at times encounter hardships resulting in an unusual amount of debt, and a system allowing essentially free credit should be there to assist in times of need. But there are others who are simply slackers, and these are the ones who can destroy such a system.

Jane makes a number of arguments against the need to worry about slackers. She says that since people would not owe other individuals but would be in debt to the "community," people would not be upset by the problem. She goes on to say that social opprobrium would minimise the problem, although she also argues that

there should be no stigma attached to debt. She even argues that it just wouldn't happen much since people would be different in some way if they used different money. And, lastly, she claims that it is better to support the slackers through the local money system, since they would otherwise outright steal from other people, causing even greater costs to the community.

Such parasitism would likely upset those in a local money scheme, much as the parasitism of the financiers and bankers in the traditional money system upsets those who set up the alternative economic arrangements in the first place. Whether as individuals or as a group, people don't like feeling taken advantage of. It is unlikely that people would continue to participate in a system where free-riding was tolerated for very long. They would gradually leave, until the scheme no longer functioned, since the producers were no longer there to make it work. If people are, as proposed by Jane, not to judge those who don't contribute, non-contribution becomes as acceptable as production and wealth creation, resulting in a system where some work for the benefit of others. Sounds an awful lot like capitalism. And paying off people so they won't rob or hurt you sounds an awful lot like taxation, extortion, and blackmail.

Another problem with Jane's proposal, related to that of free-riders, is that she insists the system be open to all, "whatever may be their propensity for criminal activity." If people are not free to avoid dealing with others of whom they disapprove within such an economic scheme, they will simply choose to avoid the scheme entirely. Open collectives are plagued with problems, since levels of commitment will differ greatly between members, as

will their goals for the organisation. Allowing anyone who wishes to join to participate in such a scheme will eventually drive out the most productive and committed and destroy the whole arrangement.

Jane also makes the mistake towards the end of this book of conflating wealth and money, something for which she faults conventional money systems. In discussing how the new society could spend its new money as it pleases, she says that a vastly-expanded mass transportation system or universal health care would cost the economy nothing, since the balance sheet would always be zero in her scheme. However, redirecting efforts to these areas would prevent wealth production in other areas, and may consume more wealth than people are willing to put into it, even if the "cost" is zero. As she states elsewhere in her book, human effort produces wealth, and people will have to make choices where they wish to direct this effort, and how much effort they are willing to expend. It is unrealistic to imagine that wealth is unlimited, even if the "money" in her proposed scheme would be. (One additional point: Jane does not even make a convincing case that her balance sheet would always show zero. What happens when members die or leave with accounts that are positive or negative?)

Overall, the book is written in understandable language, although somewhat repetitive at points. Breaking it down into short sections, and adding humorous inserts between sections has made it an easy and enjoyable read. But, while Jane has certainly identified one wrong kind of money, the local money she has proposed isn't the right one either.

Joe Peacott

Review No.2

Having been greatly disappointed by three recent forays into economics by Anarchists, this effort came as a pleasant surprise. Emily Jane is not an

Anarchist, but her extensive practical experience in LETS (Local Exchange Trading Schemes) and knowledge of capitalist finance, should make her

book of interest to readers of Total Liberty. It's well written, very accessible, and with humour drawn from the likes of "Star Trek" and "Yes,

Minister" it turns the "dismal science" into a lively read.

The first half of the book is a sparkling critique of the history of our highly complex, iniquitous, and even fraudulent financial system. She makes a distinction between money used for exchanges in the real economy by people who provide useful things, and "the wrong kind of money". The latter is the money which serves the interests of the powerful, and especially that traded as a commodity in foreign exchange dealing, interest on loans, insurance etc.

I found the second half of the book a bit dubious. Asserting that "the last bastion of power and status is money"-surely altogether too simplistic- the LETS model of "local money" is advanced as a thorough-going alternative to capitalism, which dispenses with banks, welfare and the NHS. This "local money" could, she says, cover the entire country; the finances of all are to be public; credit would be unlimited and interest free. Now, that last proposal for unlimited credit surely undermines the purpose of an exchange economy, i.e. to relate

consumption to production. Why then bother with "local money" at all? Indeed, why not become a communist?

LETS work in parallel with the formal economy, and do a great job raising untaxed, locally based income for the unemployed and the under-employed. Mary Jane pushes the model too far, but this little book still makes a useful contribution to the economics debate.

John Griffin

Benjamin Tucker - Anarchist or Capitalist?

by Gary Elkin

Benjamin Tucker was against "capitalism" in the sense of a State-supported monopoly of productive tools and equipment which allows owners to avoid paying workers the full value of their labor. This stance puts him squarely in the libertarian socialist tradition.

Indeed, Tucker referred to himself many times as a socialist. It's true that he sometimes railed against "socialism," but in those cases it is clear that he was referring to *State* socialism. He also made it clear that he is against private property and so supported Proudhon's idea of "property is theft" and even translated Proudhon's "What is Property?" where that phrase originated. Tucker advocated *possession* but not private property, believing that empty land, houses, etc. should be squatted. He considered private property in land use (which he called the "land monopoly") as one of the four great evils of capitalism. According to Tucker, "the land monopoly... consists in the enforcement by government of land titles which do not rest upon personal occupancy and cultivation... the individual should no longer be protected by their fellows in anything but personal occupation and cultivation of land" [the anarchist

reader, p150]. In this his views are directly opposed to those of right libertarians like Murray Rothbard, who advocate "absolute" property rights which are protected by laws enforced either by a "nightwatchman State" or private security forces.

Tucker believed that bankers' monopoly of the power to create credit and currency is the lynchpin of capitalism. Although he thought that all forms of monopoly are detrimental to society, he maintained that the banking monopoly is the worst form since it is the root from which both the industrial-capitalist and landlordist monopolies grow and without which they would wither and die. For if credit were not monopolized, its price (i.e. interest rates) would be much lower, which in turn would drastically lower the price of capital goods, land, and buildings - expensive items that generally cannot be purchased without access to credit. The freedom to squat empty land and buildings would, in the absence of a State to protect titles, complete the process of reducing rents toward zero.

Following Proudhon, Tucker argued that if any group of people could legally form a "mutual bank" and issue credit based on any form of collateral

they saw fit to accept, the price of credit would fall to the labor cost of the paperwork involved in issuing and keeping track of it. He claimed that banking statistics show this cost to be less than one percent of principal, and hence, that a one-time service fee which covers this cost and no more is the only non-usurious charge a bank can make for extending credit. This charge should not be called "interest," since it is non-exploitative.

Tucker believed that under mutual banking, capitalists' ability to exact exorbitant fees from workers for the use of expensive tools and equipment would be eliminated, because workers would be able to obtain zero-interest credit and use it to buy their own tools and equipment instead of "renting" them from capitalists. Easy access to mutual credit would result in a huge increase in the purchase of capital goods, creating a huge demand for labor which in turn would greatly increase employees' bargaining power and thus raise their wages toward equivalence with the value-added produced by their labour.

Tucker's ideal society is therefore one of small entrepreneurs and independent contractors. Between those who possess capital equipment and those with whom

they contract to use the equipment, he envisions a non-exploitative relationship in which value-added would be equitably distributed between them.

It's important to note that because of Tucker's proposal to increase the bargaining power of workers through access to mutual credit, his so-called Individualist anarchism is not only compatible with workers' control but would in fact promote it. For if access to mutual credit were to increase the bargaining power of workers to the extent that Tucker claimed it would, they would then be able to (1) demand and get workplace democracy, and (2) pool their credit, buy and own

companies collectively. This would eliminate the top-down structure of the firm and the ability of owners to pay themselves unfairly large salaries. Thus the logical consequence of Tucker's proposals would be a system functionally equivalent in most respects to the kind of system advocated by left libertarians.

Tucker's system does retain some features of capitalism, such as competition between firms in a "free market." However, markets are only a necessary condition of capitalism, not a sufficient condition. There can also be a "free market" under socialism, though it would be of a different nature. The

fundamental anarchist objection to capitalism is not that it involves markets but that it involves private property and wage slavery. Tucker's system would eliminate both, which is why he called himself a socialist. Thus Tucker is clearly a left libertarian rather than a forefather of right libertarianism. In this he comes close to what today would be called a "market socialist," albeit a non-statist variety.

(This article is reprinted from those archived among the Spunk Press Collection at <http://www.spunk.org>)

Guns of Humour and Bullets of Parody By Dave Cunliffe

Studied iconoclasm, theoretical dissent and analytical critique can be a root source of meaningful activity. Regrettably for most varieties of Anarchists, it usually manifests as a safe academic irrelevance. Negative destruction, innocent of positive replacement, inevitably leads to a worse situation. All cereal packet Xmas cracker wisdom, but still essentially true. Our inner Emperor and forelock demon (naked or clothed) will continue unhindered rule - unless we fashion some new psychic knickers. Practicing a little of what we preach (whatever that may be) would be a refreshing, if unusual, initiative in our everyday life. All that warm and comforting self-deception would have to go. We don't really accept the rewards of conformity in order to subvert and change an oppressive Society and repressive Culture. We don't truly seek privileged education and prestigious careers for the purposes of infiltration and the eventual overthrow of our Host. Our ongoing complicity is rather motivated by simple greed and basic insecurity. Accepting that our egotistical makeup is not such that we enter political office

or work's management, in order to bully and cajole others for their own good. Acknowledging that our verbal and textual diarrhoea is unintended to guide readers into our own authoritarian utopias of static certainty and revealed truth. However innocent (we may imagine ourselves to be) of these motivating human animal vices, we are generally all still full of myriad bullshit, false image and unbelievable hypocrisy. At least I am.

In my callow youth, I wasted many hours in both country-simple and imaginative (if not innovative) anti-election activity. At that time, my venerable Anarchist guru Arthur Moyses would electoral vote for Old Labour in order to meet "the needs of the moment". Such early sixties direct action (sometimes exciting living theatre) usually generated visits from plain-clothes police and attracted other bureaucratic attention. It certainly gave me the illusion that I was at least doing something. Like pissing against a hurricane, which in itself is no bad thing.

As I mellowed into middle-age, ideals tended to become flexible or corrupted.

As Arthur Moyses's sixties voting displeased the *Freedom* editorial collective (that is the late Jack Robinson) my Anarchism became tainted by two electoral excursions. Previously I had voted (in my unimaginative stereotype way) for Guy Fawkes and later for the legendary Anarchist anti-hero Albert Ferkinshaw. This was permitted by the Movement Thought Police but then a brace of perverse deviations. I voted, in a European Election for the Green Party and to my retrospective shame they did well and took it seriously. Shaving beards, wearing suits and joining the acceptable herd. I later voted for the sexual prostitute Ms Whiplash (who put out the most radical political manifesto I've yet read) and didn't get a good spanking as an inducement or bribe. Various libellous rumours to that effect circulated at the time. Doubtless spread by remnants of the defunct Anarchism Lancastrium dirty tricks Department.

In relative maturity (white-bearded), I regressed to the extreme unswerving idealistic dogma of youth. Declining to get involved with the project fusion of The Rainbow Party and Screaming

Lord Such's outfit. I have never since been near a polling booth to vote or demonstrate.

Arthur Moyses once planned to put his dog Patch up for election but, in true Anarchist fashion, not enough promised people turned up to complete the required candidature forms. The

broadcaster and writer Ray Gosling once told me he'd stood in Nottingham as 'a madman' and asked people not to vote for him. This I'm convinced is the way to go. We will progress the struggle best with guns of humour and bullets of parody. Mark Thomas's C4 Television humorous (surreal but

common-sense) excursions against the abusers of Power and Privilege, promote the 'Anarchist message' more than a billion humourless puritanical judgmental campaigns.

Dodgy Logic and the Olympians

By John Griffin

Towards an Inclusive Democracy by Takis Fotopoulos 1997.
380 Pages published by Cassall £55 hardback £18.99 paperback

Whilst considering this book and Richard Griffin's (no relation) article in TL4 about science and "post-modernism", my thoughts strayed to the earliest of the ancient Greek philosophers, those who came before Socrates. A good deal of what they had to say really lay in the realm of science, as we would now call it, for their purpose was to grasp *what* made the world tick. As the centuries unfolded, the sciences developed as separate branches of enquiry, and philosophy increasingly concerned itself with *how* we humans fitted into the world, that is with *mind*. Faced with contemporary disasters like Marxism and nuclear bombs, one branch of philosophy "post-modernism" has made the separation with science the more emphatic by expressing disenchantment and even hostility towards it.

I persist in using the inverted commas because I'm not sure what "postmodernism" is. If it were limited to a critique of the philosophy and science spawned by our authoritarian cultures - the inhuman bigness, reductionism and needless gadgetry - I would have no quarrel with it. Richard and others however, go further and cast doubt upon scientific method itself. To give credence to a dodgy logic, in my view tending toward Nihilism and Luddism, Richard then turns to science (!) and enlists Chaos/Complexity Theory (CT) to support his argument. Yet CT has none of the vacuousness of "post-modernism": we are talking about

very practical hard science. Because it handles randomness rejects reductionism and embraces holism, CT is not



"less certain", it is good science. Furthermore, to me personally it is exciting, it makes me feel that my philosophy "works" because it moves as the world moves, thereby going some way to reconciling "mind" -my mind at least- with everything else, a symbiosis between Anarchism and cutting edge science.

With this rather heady methodology at the back of my mind, I focussed upon the economics contained in "Towards an Inclusive Democracy;" here is a set of proposals so determinedly "modern" as to constitute a "blueprint" of a revolutionary future.

The book is well organised, accessible (if you can afford it) and clearly written. Earlier chapters are critiques of capitalist development, state socialism and the ecological crisis. Assuming readers to be too familiar with these matters, I'll pass on quickly

to the positive proposals, elaborated upon in much detail in the latter pages.

The broad outline encompasses the familiar system of recallable delegates applied to workplace assemblies, local community assemblies, and a confederal assembly. These are to function together in a society which is stateless, moneyless and in harmony with the natural world. With consumption to be directly related to need, there is a powerful whiff of anarchist communism here, but I cannot see many communists being enthused by the more detailed proposals - as so often has been the case in the past things begin to unravel once you look at the economics.

Having been told there is to be no money or market, we learn that the factories etc are to be "owned" by the general community, and "leased" to the "employees" for a "long term contract." Passing over these confusions in terminology - Fotopoulos is principally concerned with resolving the problem of community control - there is also to be a means of exchange which is not money. Access to goods is to be through the use of a voucher system.

The economy is to be split into a basic sector (food, clothes etc) and a non-basic sector (lollipops, CDs etc.); basic and non-basic vouchers are to be used accordingly. People with special needs, the disabled for instance, will be able to have them met directly by presentation of the appropriate vouchers. The issue of the vouchers,

together with the number of hours of work required for the production of goods, is to be determined by the various assemblies; supply and demand are thereby to be kept in balance. The core idea is that Fotopolous proposes ongoing economic planning meetings, to replace the billions of decisions made by individuals in the market, and instead of tax and benefit arrangements for welfare. It is hoped that contemporary co-ops and LETS may act as stepping stones toward these ends.

My objections to these truly sweeping proposals are as follows:

- 1.) The voucher system is intentionally less flexible than a cash economy. Heavily bureaucratic, it is burdened by additional operating costs, and likely to collapse under the weight of all those meetings.
- 2.) The vouchers will clearly regulate demand and consumption, but one wonders how exchanges between factories and suppliers of raw materials would be effected. What form does capital for investment take, and how is overseas trade to be carried out? Only the later problem is dealt with, and dismissed in three lines, with vague talk of "bilateral or multi-lateral agreements."
- 3.) Fotopolous rejects not only the market, tending, perhaps deliberately to confuse it with the capitalist market, but also the gift economy. Yet totally unregulated expressions of mutual aid have always made a valuable contribution to the economy and to social life generally. Why throw it all away?
- 4.) Having made a commitment to the ecological society, there is no discussion of what might constitute sustainable levels of consumption, but the voucher system could obviously be used to ration goods.
- 5.) The key reason for using the vouchers is to make the hoarding of capital, and therefore a reversion to capitalism, impossible; but psycho-social tendencies like power seeking and greed, are surely not going to be "engineered" out of existence by monkeying around with the currency.

I found "Towards an Inclusive Democracy" to be strongly reminiscent of "Workers Councils and the Economics of the Self-Managed Society" by Cornelius Castoriadis, 1972, and "Social Anarchism" by Giovanni Baldelli, 1971. What is astounding to me, as a practical man, is that anyone can be so reckless as to propose throwing away *all* the pieces of the existing economic jigsaw, in favour of just one untried system, yet Fotopolous follows the above writers and does just that. All seem blind to the fact that the market, and the informal unregulated economy, are concrete realities because they work, and have been working effectively for centuries - since the Greeks in fact. Do these people - note the Greek names of two of them - sense an Olympian greatness flowing in their veins as they take up their pens and fresh sheets of paper? I have my tongue in check here, but you can see what I mean.

Libertarian economics is desperately under theorised. The gap will not be filled with "post-modernist" waffle, but it is surely an error to contrive narrow, reductionist models like that of Fotopolous, in the belief that they are theoretically rigorous. As I've tried to make clear, modern science, some of it at least, suggests multi-stranded, flexible, practice based ideas, but why should some anarchists wish to follow other paths?

Post Script:

Cornelius Castoriadis sadly died in December 1997; he was very influential in the now apparently defunct Solidarity grouping.

Statewatching

"STATEWATCHING the New Europe - A handbook on the European State." Edited by Tony Bunyan.

A Statewatch publication sponsored by Unison. (1993) £4.50 (including p&p) from Statewatch, PO Box 1516, London N160EW. ISBN 1 874481 02 4 "STATEWATCH" monitoring the state and civil liberties in the UK and Europe. Edited by Tony Bunyan. Published six times a year. Subscription rates £15 per annum, Institutions and

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<http://www.poptel.org.uk/statewatch/> NOTES FROM THE BORDERLAND edited by Larry O'Hara, BM Box 4769, London WC1N 3XX

Pager No: 01523 492994. £5 for two issues.

I was in Barcelona a few years ago and a colleague in the group, had her handbag stolen. After she had cancelled her credit cards she went to report it to the local police station. After queuing for two hours - there must have been a lot of crime there - she was told she had come to the wrong police station of the wrong police force and to go to the other station which was over the other side of the square. It took over half a day to make the report. The problem was that Spain has some four police forces all doing different things. She was lucky it was not Italy as they have five. Curiously it is only the Germanic countries that (usually) only have one police force for everything. The Latin countries go in for diversification it seems. As one Spanish friend says "When robbed its no use going to the police. Find out who controls the local mafia and make an offer."

This is an excellent book which covers not only the police forces of the European Union and EFTA countries: their type, function, number (including their percentage of women), their arms and their number per 100,000 of the population. It also covers their secret police, immigration and asylum. It strikes me it is a book every Anarchist should know about. In fact when I reviewed it for *Freedom* they failed to publish the review. When I placed it jointly in a review article with a book by Larry O'Hara they very carefully cut every mention of the book. A book on the state which - as I said, every Anarchist should know about? The reason? "We don't sell it in Freedom Bookshop." Of course it is not mail order. How parochial can you get? Are Freedom Bookshop interested in defeating the state and capitalism or just selling books talking about defeating the state and capitalism? STATEWATCH the magazine is an