

situation, at least in part. Through gradual and often small changes in the way people think and lead their lives today, and through a continual expansion in the number of people adopting a libertarian outlook, government can be abolished and the world changed to a free one.

Collectivists, on the other hand, often seem to view people as perpetual victims of an evil social system, which strips them of the ability to make choices, and therefore frees them of all responsibility for their lives and problems. This view of people leads to an elitist attitude toward people and their problems. Collectivists often end up in the un-anarchic position of regarding people as ignorant and immature, and therefore in need of protection from themselves and others by continued regulation and laws. Rarely, for instance, do collectivists endorse decriminalisation and deregulation of drugs as a solution to the violence and illness associated with the use of illegal pleasure drugs. In their view, apparently, it is only after the revolution (made by the enlightened collectivists) has been achieved, and the economic levelling of libertarian socialism has allowed other people to develop their reasoning faculty to an adequate level, that they should be allowed to make unsupervised decisions.

Because of their different outlook on people, individualists look at people's problems and their solutions in a vastly different way. The primary idea in individualist thought is that the individual person should be free to do whatever they wish with their body or property, provided it does not interfere with the equal freedom of other non-invasive or non-coercive persons. Additionally, individualists support the freedom of people to engage in whatever activities they wish with other consenting persons in all spheres of human interaction. People should be free to choose any kind of economic, sexual, medical, or any other sort of relationship with any person who consents to it.

Joe Peacott

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# TOTAL LIBERTY

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## Editorial

PERHAPS it is a reflection of Total Liberty being based outside of London and the other big UK cities but this editor sees little evidence on the street or in the public domain of the existence of an anarchist movement in the UK. There are a few pieces of political graffiti in Derby, some circled @s, a picture of Ghandi with the word 'anarchist' beneath it, some fading slogans protesting taxes and the War in Iraq, but by and large any radical ideas, let alone ideas concerning anarchism are unknown to people in Derby and to the vast majority of people in this country. Occasionally the popular press may scream about ANARCHY but only in the sense of anarchy meaning chaos. Rarely is there any fair coverage, but then that cannot be expected from the mass media with its agenda, which is to maximise circulation and profits and certainly not to challenge the received wisdom of the age.

Where there are signs of anarchist activity, it is on the margins, on a small and almost invisible scale, certainly not one that attracts much attention. A housing co-op here, a wholefood shop there, an occasional intentional community, a summer festival, a march or protest, an allotment site where the allotment holders practise mutual aid, co-operation and the gift economy, or the small businesses and housing co-ops that exist within Radical Routes, or individuals practising self employment to earn a living providing a useful service within a community. However, isolated anarchists, and that is the majority of us, usually just get on with our lives without shouting to the world or preaching about our ideas. Perhaps that is the reason why we remain a small marginal group, hardly a movement. Certainly we have no interest in creating the massive and bureaucratic party type machines that badger people with ideas and pressurize them to vote or to sign up as party members. The vast majority of people in Britain have long since voted with their feet and no longer participate in the electoral scam. But there does remain an interest in the public sphere when things touch people personally, when there is a proposal to close a school or hospital, to build on the local playing fields, or to open yet another supermarket. People are rightly active when their communities are threatened and in that at least there is a hope that some level of community and public life will remain.

### Notes from the editor

AS with many other anarchist and fringe journals *Total Liberty* suffers from a distinct lack of feedback from its readership. The lack of a letters column in some issues is not a sign of arrogance on the part of the editor refusing to publish letters which are received, it is rather a reflection of the absence of letters received for that particular edition. So aside from encouraging readers to consider writing articles for the journal, 800 to 1200 words ideally, some feedback in the form of letters would be much appreciated.

Financially the journal continues to raise enough funds from sales, subscriptions and donations to cover the costs of printing and most of the postage costs. However, to keep the magazine viable please do renew your subscription if it is due.



## Contempt

Only a people filled with contempt for others could march in and seize a territory, then expel or murder the inhabitants. The Aboriginal populations of the Americas, the Pacific and Australia (as well as present day Palestinians) were written off as "heathens", "racially and-or culturally inferior" or non-existent, ("the land was vacant") thus justifying theft and genocidal murder. But all that babble was nothing but a cover-up for contempt.

Working people have died by the millions - and are still dying - in unsafe mines and factories and the boss-classes wars. Only rulers filled with contempt for working people could do such a thing. Of course, this contempt is rationalized with verbiage about "survival of the fittest", "national interest" and self-aggrandizing prattle about "expertise" and "leadership."

Latin America was pillaged first by British companies and now by US corporate and governmental interests, the latter with their death squads and torture schools having introduced an unprecedented level of sadism. For the Imperial Masters to commit such crimes, they must feel the deepest contempt for the people they persecute and exploit. All callously written off with, "Well, they are only Indians, anyway," or they are "communists" or have "an inferior culture."

For several thousand years (at least) women and children have been humiliated, degraded, abused, beaten and raped by patriarchal society. Only men (and female Quislings) full of contempt (self-contempt for the

latter) would treat their sisters, mothers, wives and offspring in this manner. All the silly self-serving rationalizations are trotted out - "women are less intelligent", children are "ignorant", "their place is to obey".

The fact is, the folks held in contempt by the Masters are actually SUPERIOR to them, (1) and maintaining that contempt is an unending task. What a constant struggle it is to prop up this facade! In spite of "inferiority", the "natives" know the country and teach the arrogant, stupid white man how to live there, the workers keep things running and produce the wealth, not their inept and parasitic bosses. Latin Americans possess a history and culture that makes the Gringos look like poor uncultured wretches, women are usually wiser than men and children easily see through the adult's childish ideologically-rooted obsessions.

Now you might well ask that if contempt is a mask, a cover-up for exploitation and bullying, what is it about the dominators that makes them wish to commit these crimes? In part, we are dealing with deep-rooted insecurity. The need to trample over others to become "someone", the overweening lust for power, all speak of people who need to bolster their egos in an obsessive manner. In reading the lives of the ruling classes, we often discover a family life of cold, distant parents and authoritarian schooling or upbringing. These are common roots of emotional insecurity.

We also read of the many "Little Caligulas", the sociopathic spoiled brats of the ruling class. They have no empathy for the ordinary person, and if they have to kill a hundred thousand of them to pursue a political or economic goal, it is no more than stepping on a bug. Neurotics and sociopaths, our Masters are emotionally sick. Rather than, when the time comes, putting them up against the wall as emotionally satisfying as that might be, they ought instead to be placed in institutions for the criminally insane.

Larry Gambone

1. True enough, during a class system's "Heroic Period" the rulers are quite often people of intelligence and character, however, during a time of decline, such as the present, the lesser types take charge. Compare Washington and Bush, Gladstone and Blair, and you get the idea.

# WERE THE ANCIENT INDUS VALLEY AND MIDDLE NIGER CITIES ANARCHIST?

Urbanization and civilization imply each other. A major justification for the existence of the state is to maintain social order, and that such a system of dominance is especially necessary in an urban setting. This is because it is within that setting that there is considerable heterogeneity and hence no common social outlook. Conflict within the community will be more frequent and the settling disputes much more difficult due to the divergence of views. Thus it is claimed one requires an overseer who can impose settlements.

We do have two cases of alleged anarchist urban areas in Barcelona during the Spanish Civil War and in two Ukrainian cities following the first World War. The entire existence of both were, however, within the highly abnormal condition of total war and were extremely short-lived.

If we look back at the archaeological record there is evidence for other examples. However, evidence for the absence of government and the state is extremely difficult to discern in that record. One of the basic rules of archaeology is that the absence of something within an excavation does not mean that it did not exist. It could have been totally destroyed, overlooked or misinterpreted. Among other things it seems to be part of general archaeological theory that civilization and urbanism can only occur with the existence of hierarchy and such a notion clearly prejudices any interpretation of data.

The archaeological record presently shows at least two places where there was urban development which might have occurred without government and the state. Both cases are, I think, equivocal. Nevertheless, they deserve attention. The oldest of these sites concerns the Harappan civilization

which existed from the mid-third millennium to the early second millennium BCE on the banks of the Indus and Ghaggar-Hakra rivers in what is present day Pakistan. The second is an urban agglomeration in the Middle Niger in West Africa in what is present day Mali. It existed from the early first millennium BCE to the end of the first millennium CE.

## The Harappan Culture

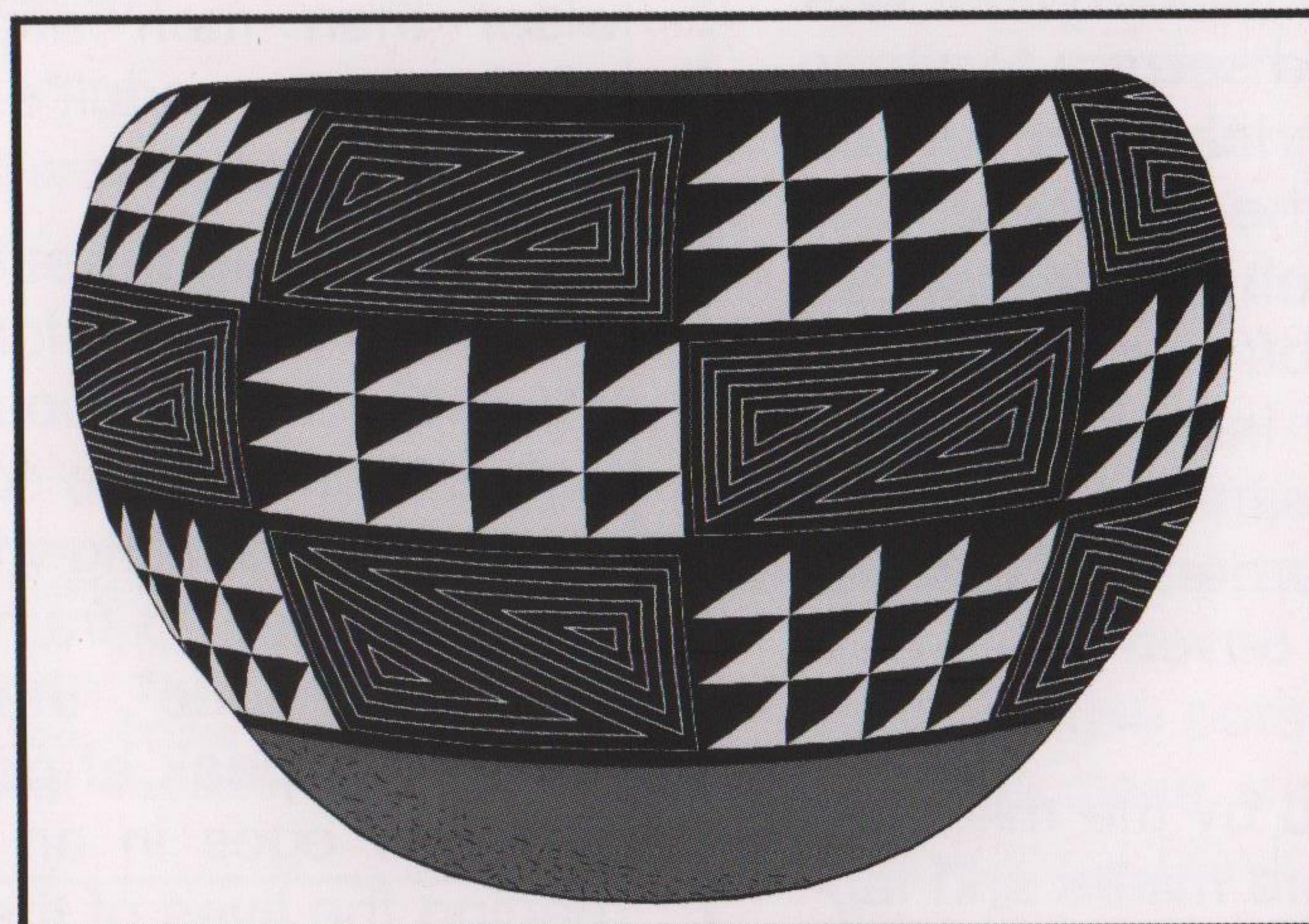
According to Kenoyer (2005) Harappan cities had no massive tombs or large statuary. Despite the fact that there was elaborate city

planning with drainage and sewerage systems, baths and streets, all public buildings were simple and there were no large palaces or temples.

War was apparently unimportant since there were no war memorials and human remains indicated no violent deaths (Kenoyer, 15). Walls surrounding cities possessed no moats. Finally,

they produced few types of weapons and no defensive armour even though they had sophisticated metal working techniques (Kenoyer, 135). In all likelihood there was an upper elite of traders and commercial disputes were settled by guilds. Guilds, neighbourhoods and clans all had an interest in a peaceful settlement of disputes. Merchants, especially a top elite, also controlled affairs through ritual and belief. Kenoyer claims order was maintained "without resort to physical coercion"(99). Both merchants and priests were apparently closely tied to one another and the merchant groups were likely organized into clans in which some were clearly kinsmen and others were based on imagined kinship (Kenoyer, 99-102).

Thompson claims these cities had no state, but one must understand that his idea of the state is that of Albert Jay Nock who in his book. "Our Enemy the State", claimed that government was universal to all societies ex-



isting to protect private property while the state enters to picture as an institution aimed at capturing the government for special class interests (Thompson, 369). But Kenoyer believes there were merchant elites which indicates social classes. Kenoyer states further that they had some kind of rulers. Perhaps these interpretations are influenced by the belief common to archaeologists that any civilization must have a government.

## The Ancient Mid Niger People

Roderick McIntosh in his "Ancient Middle Niger: Urbanism and the Self-Organizing Landscape" (2005) asks how one can have "cities without citadels" and suggested that urbanism does not have to follow a single unitary direction towards a centralised state (10-11). The population was and remains considerably dense with groups composed of herders, fishers, farmers, blacksmiths and others (7). These groups themselves are internally specialized so that, for example, among the fishermen are hand-net, shallow swamp fishermen, deep channel collective net fishermen and specialists in catching crocodiles, hippos and giant perch (149). Aside from the specialized activities the region's inhabitants are divided amongst several ethnic groups (114). Within this diversity each group maintains its autonomy with mutual interdependence with and tolerance of the other groups.

According to McIntosh all ethnic groups in the area adhere to what he calls Mande core concepts (139ff). These include reciprocity and emphasis on cooperation and reputation so that a distinct role for the individual, trust in others and acceptance of pluralism and decentralization of powers are all considered paramount. McIntosh implied an urban agglomeration without state organization in which order is maintained through belief in the Mande core concepts. He finds no evidence for a centralized state such as palaces, military emphasis and the like. As with the Harappan material we are not provided with the specific devices by which order is maintained. A further problem is that McIntosh places such emphasis on Mande core concepts which are derived from the ethnographic record of contemporary people and not from the archaeological site. We have no way of knowing whether they are

features of the culture in prehistoric times but must only assume this and assume further that such concepts were unchanging for the past thousand years. At least not unlike Harappan culture it was a highly decentralized society in which warfare was uncommon and interregional trade was of considerable importance.

It should be pointed out that written documents are no help in understanding these two cultures. No one has as yet deciphered the Harappan script, while the Mid Niger people had no writing system.

Aside from the maintenance of social order these cities also undoubtedly had cooperative organizations for provisioning of water, sewerage disposal, fire protection, road maintenance and in a modern situation would also have similar organizations for electrical power, education, health and medicine. If there was no state or autocratic leaders and, particularly, with their apparent egalitarianism and lack of hierarchy they might have maintained social order in a fashion similar to the acephalous segmentary lineage systems of Africa in which impartial mediators, rather than arbitrators, resolve disputes.

In sum, whether Harappan or ancient Mid Niger cities were truly acephalous remains a question for lack of firm data. If they were indeed acephalous it means that civilization can arise and thrive in the absence of a state.

Harold Barclay

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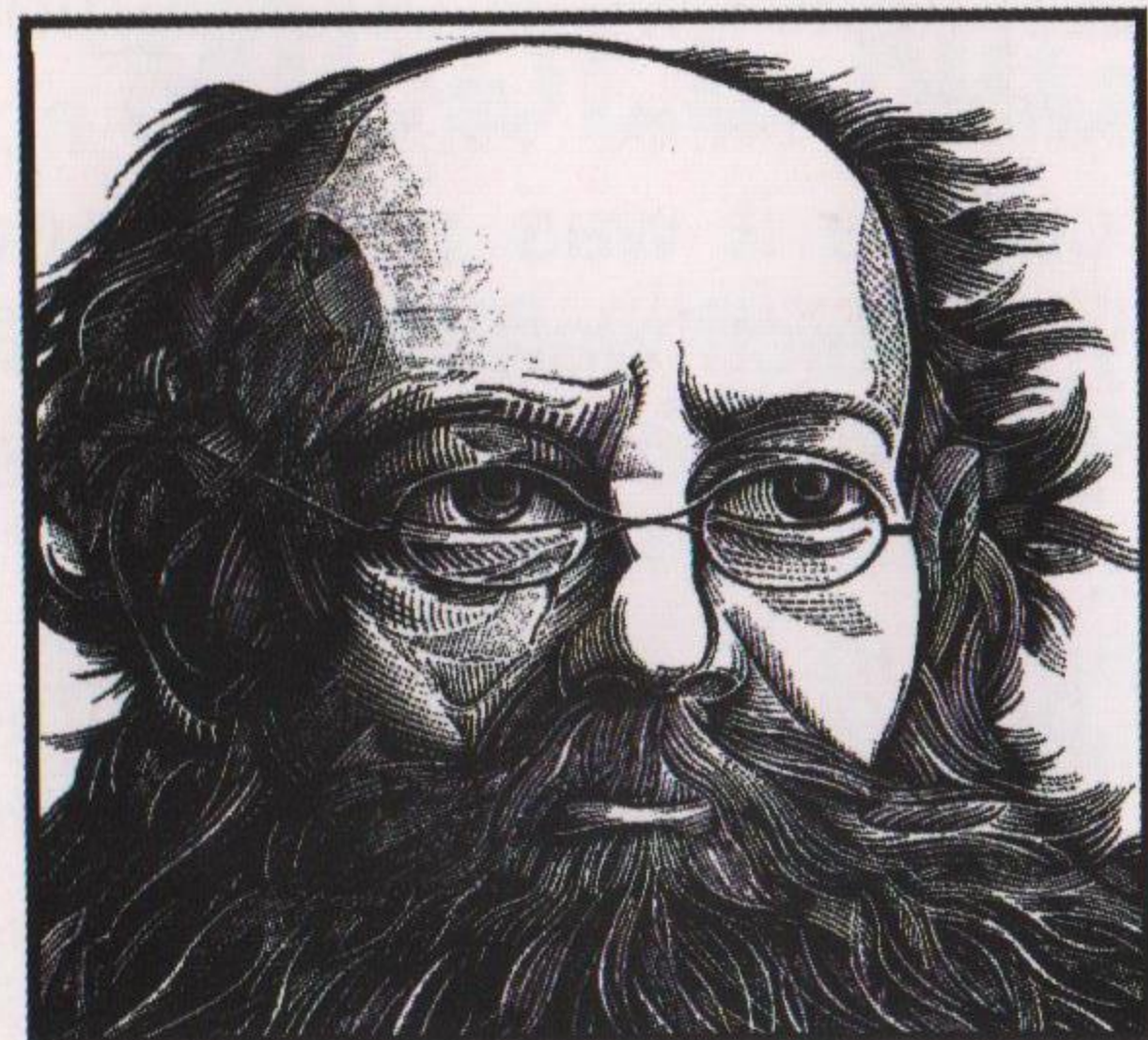
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## Calm over the waters



### What anarchists taught me about the universe

I am often frustrated by a media portrayal of the 'creation versus evolution' debate. Regularly a scientist and creationist are wheeled out on TV to oppose one another with well-worn meaningless arguments. So I am going to assume that creationists misunderstand science because they use it to prove rather than disprove a thesis and they misunderstand the Bible because they have absolutely no self-awareness or sense of the beauty of language and myth. Scientists argue with creationists over their bad science when the root of the problem is theological. On the one hand most people have a real concern about what is being taught in schools of state and faith. On the other hand since only a vocal and narrow-minded minority of the world believe in a seven-day creation (sic.), or 'Intelligent Design Science', or 'young earth' or however it is dressed the rest of us have exhausted our patience and good humour on the matter and wish it closed.

I lay my cards on the table now as a Christian. Worse: an Anglican – a member of the established church. There are those who wish I didn't call myself a Christian because they feel that it's woolly liberals like me that give Jesus a bad name. There may be anarchists who cringe at my association with anarchism because it conflicts with the important axiom "No gods; no masters."

I have never lost an argument with a creationist because, like most of them, I am not a scientist, but unlike most of them, I do understand how biblical literature works and have actually read the Bible. Seriously: I've lost track of the number of times I have had to

point out to a creationist that the first Genesis account of creation has God make the world in *six* days, not *seven*. I have even reduced a creationist to tears of embarrassment, not one of my proudest moments, simply by forcing her own arguments to their logical yet silly conclusion. I've never managed to persuade a single one of them however. Unreasoned faith cannot be swayed by reason; pride and fear do not allow it.

Perhaps the argument should not be closed but merely steered in new directions. After all we all have an opinion and a concept of history and narrative. None of us are immune to its impact on our own worldview. So here's where Peter Kropotkin comes in.

I imagine most readers of this *Journal of evolutionary anarchism* will be familiar with the name and work of Kropotkin, the Russian royal turned anarchist. But for me he is a new and exciting find. Kropotkin's great nemesis in the evolution debate was Henry Huxley who took Darwin's ideas along with an already popular worldview of the violence of humanity and gave us the emphasis on 'survival of the fittest'. It is important to note that this was never Darwin's intention. So, Kropotkin challenged this emphasis, as politely as one would expect of an anarchist. He suggested that the over-riding principal of all manner of species, even between certain species, and in human history is not competition but co-operation: mutual aid.

This emphasis on mutual aid is the key theme missing from the debate. While fundamentalist Christians argue with evolutionists on the issue of whether God had an invisible hand in the development of the universe we all miss the terrible damage done by the lie that is 'survival of the fittest'. Religious fundamentalists have no reason to challenge such scientific dogma as it serves a theology where moral authority is backed up with military supremacy. A position rooted in the Judaeo-Christian texts.

A better understanding of evolution offers the religious minded an invaluable critique of the universe. Kropotkin's book, *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution*, is one of the most heart-warming and inspiring things I have ever read. And it rallies me to state: the scientists are wrong, we are not designed primarily to compete, the fundamentalists are also wrong, basically about pretty much every-

thing from religion to science to politics.

Kropotkin, living in a far more religious-minded context than our own, was a peer of the original Christian anarchist – Leo Tolstoy. The former referred generously to the latter in his entry on anarchism for the Encyclopaedia Britannica. Kropotkin takes a refreshingly balanced approach to religion, perhaps because he is foremost an anthropological scientist before a propagandist. On the one hand he notes the role of the church in acclimatising "barbarians" to the "idea that private property in land is possible" and to "Roman law". Indeed since the fourth century the Church has been unashamedly the second sword of Rome. On the other hand he sees in primitive religion the seeds of anarchic hope and mutual aid. "In primitive Buddhism, in primitive Christianity, in the writings of some of the Mussulman (sic.) teachers, ... the total abandonment of the idea of revenge, or of "due reward" – of good for good and evil for evil – is affirmed more and more vigorously."

It is for Christians to redeem this aspect of their founder's teachings and enter dialogue with their peers on it. It is for the anarchists to help them in the task.

So I set this challenge to myself: to develop an alternative theology of mutual aid borrowing from the beautiful metaphors of faith and the keenest of anarchic evolutionary thought. And a challenge to other readers of this piece: if you haven't read *Mutual Aid*, I would recommend it to you. If you are more up to date on this debate – after all Kropotkin's been dead a good while now – I submit my email address and a request for help along my journey.

Keith Hebden

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## The Drug War is the Health of the State

In 1918, Randolph Bourne wrote an essay which came to be called *War is the Health of the State*. In it, he argued that the characteristics which define a state come to full flower only during military campaigns. War encourages nationalism, obedience, coercion, intolerance, and violence. The "first" world war, which prompted Bourne to write this piece, not only produced mass slaughter, but cranked up patriotism and repression in the United States and the other "homelands" with the result that anyone who spoke out against the killing was considered a traitor worthy only of contempt, and dissidents were arrested, beaten, killed, and imprisoned.

The word war has come to be used more loosely and metaphorically since Bourne's day. There was the war on poverty and the war on cancer, neither of which were military operations, but both of which resulted in a surrender by the government. And then there is the ongoing war on drugs. This war shares some of the characteristics of the latter two in that the campaign involves government funding of research and education programs to counteract what it sees as a social problem. But it has come to resemble more and more a traditional war both in its strategy of aggressively and violently enforcing anti-drug laws domestically and its increasing use of military and political intervention in the affairs of other countries. While this war is, technically, not a military campaign, it is used to justify warlike government action both at home and abroad.

### The Myth of Dangerous Drugs

The drug warriors believe that any use of recreational drugs that are not approved of by the government and polite society is a problem. In fact, it is considered not only a social problem, but a medical problem as well. The authorities would have us believe not only that regular users of cocaine, heroin, and even cannabis, are suffering from a disease called addiction, which, of course, requires expert medical treatment, but that any use of

these drugs is harmful. Any bogus study which claims to prove that marijuana or coke are dangerous in heretofore unknown ways merits immediate coverage in the newspaper and on television. It can be the most patent nonsense, whether it is that smoking cocaine or methamphetamine is immediately addicting, that cannabis causes brain damage, or that snorting coke spreads hepatitis C. If something bad can be said about illegal drugs it will be.

In addition to exaggerating the adverse physical effects of illicit drugs, the experts have sold most people a bill of goods in the form of the addiction hypothesis. The theory goes that habitual users of cocaine methamphetamine, opium, etc, continue to use these drugs despite the financial, physical, and social effects their intemperate use can lead to, because they have a medical condition which compels them to continue getting high. This is nonsense. Using drugs, like any other habit, is ultimately a

voluntary act over which the individual has control. For whatever reasons, some people find it easier to give up habits which serve them poorly, whether smoking meth or biting one's fingernails, more easily than others. But just because some find it more difficult or distressing to change their behaviour than do others, this does not mean they are ill.

They have simply chosen unwisely, as many other people do in any of a number of areas of their lives.

Even the medical and legal powers-that-be who promote such misconceptions about drug users don't really believe this crap, however. If they did, their approach would be different. In the case of real diseases, when people do not take recommended treatments or they continue to do things that make them sicker, they do not run the risk of ending up in jail for doing so. But when an addict is caught buying or using drugs they can be arrested and thrown in prison. Hardly a thera-

peutic intervention.

This punitive approach on the part of the state has also spread into private employment settings. People are routinely asked to piss in a cup for drug-testing before being hired, and can be tested at random in some occupations. Having a dirty urine, even if there is no problem with one's work and no evidence that the person is under the influence of drugs during working hours can mean being fired, and in state-licensed occupations, being blackballed from working in one's speciality unless one undergoes the torment of "rehabilitation" and constant surveillance.

### **Caution: Use of Police Powers Can Be Habit-forming**

While the pseudo-medical approach to drug users has the flavour of social work about it, the warrior mentality comes out unadorned in the government's methods of



dealing with those who provide the drugs. Punitive as the cops and courts can be in their approach to drug consumers, they reserve their special wrath for those who grow, sell, transport, or otherwise are involved in the supply end of the drugs trade. Most of those arrested for possession or use do not actually end up serving time in prison anymore, but thousands of people are arrested and do se-

rious jail time simply for growing or selling a product others want to buy. Someone growing cannabis plants on federal land, for example can spend years in prison if caught. Mandatory minimum sentencing laws ensure severe penalties even for non-violent activities related to the drug trade.

The collateral damage in this war extends beyond drug users and their dealers. The war on drugs has led police departments to become more like the military with SWAT teams and snipers and armoured vehicles. Squads of goons dressed in black lay siege to apartment houses, batter down doors, and terrorize uninvolved neighbours, who are

forced out of their homes and onto the streets and sidewalks while the cops wreck their buildings in order to "protect" them by rooting out the evil drug sellers. And if, as often happens, the cops have wrong information from their paid informants, people who have no ties to drugs at all can be beaten, arrested, and even killed, before the police will admit they have made a mistake.

Besides allowing cops the excuse to act like the bullies they are trained and desire to be, laws designed to fight drugs also encourage cops to go after people with minimal evidence. Forfeiture laws allow police to take possession of personal property that they contend was acquired with drug money, even in cases where the evidence is minimal. Simply having large amounts of cash on your person or in your home is presumptive of guilt to these thugs, and they are more than happy to relieve you of it. Even if the cases never go to trial, and they often don't, it is almost impossible for people affected by these laws to regain the cash, homes, and/or vehicles stolen from them in the name of the drug war.

### **The Real Drug Wars**

However violent and repressive the domestic drug campaign against drugs is, the toll on peaceful people in the United States pales in comparison to that taken on those in other countries to which the American government has exported its anti-drug policy. The American military killed hundreds in Panama when it invaded that country to capture Noriega. American money and arms have fed the war of terror by the Colombian military against farmers who grow coca there. And thousands have been killed in the area of Mexico near the border with the United States, where American drug enforcement administration agents and Mexican police are at virtual open war with drug traders.

Now that the war of terror is losing support among Americans, the government is using the cultivation of opium poppies in part of Afghanistan as a justification for its continued attacks against the people who live in that country. But even when there is no real evidence of any drug-related activity going on in some country whose rulers they dislike, the politicians will invoke the drug war as an excuse for their belligerence. If they can't find other means to generate support for their de-

structive campaigns against other countries, American officials are not above making up charges of drug-trading to justify hostile propaganda and embargoes, as they have in the case of Cuba.

All of this murder and mayhem is bad enough, but the hypocrisy of American foreign policy related to drugs is almost incredible. During the war against the people who live in Indochina, United States agents worked with heroin traders in the golden triangle. They supported Noriega for many years, during which time he was engaged in the activities for which the Americans arrested and jailed him. At the time of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, American spies worked with opium growers to raise money for the Islamist resistance, which ended up producing the Taliban. And who can forget the CIA's commerce in cocaine to raise money for their war against the Sandinista government and the people living in Nicaragua. The United States government has no business preaching to anyone, whether it is drug users or foreign governments, about the evils of illegal drugs.

### **What Prohibition Has Wrought.**

There is nothing inherently wrong with using cocaine, heroin, or cannabis. Using too much too often can cause problems, financial or physical or social, for people, but so can shopping or eating to excess, driving too fast, or taking too much aspirin. Lying about the supposed evils of recreational drugs and trying to prohibit their use not only does not keep people from using them, but drives them to use them in unsafe ways. Prohibition and the illegal trade in drugs that it creates, makes the product costly because of the risks involved and encourages adulteration of the goods, since there can be no above-ground quality control monitoring. Illegality leads to more concentrated products which are easier to transport secretly, so people end up smoking, snorting, or injecting coke instead of chewing coca leaves, a safer and cheaper method of administration. The same thing happened when alcohol was banned in the United States: people switched from low alcohol beverages like beer and wine to higher potency drinks like whiskey. Thus the drug war, like alcohol prohibition, has not made life safer for users.

Because the dangers involved in growing and selling illegal drugs lead to higher prices than these products would otherwise command, there is a lot of money to be made in this business. High profit margins and the lack of other methods of resolving disputes in such an underground enterprise lead to violent interactions between competing traders, as well as between the traders and the legal authorities, again as was the case during alcohol prohibition. So teenagers shoot each other on the streets of the United States, gang members kill cops in Mexico, and American bombers murder farmers in Afghanistan. And all to keep individuals from ingesting or injecting something they like into their own bodies.

The drug war has led to more violent policing, high rates of incarceration of non-violent law-breakers, the death of people uninvolved in drug use or commerce, and increased snooping into people's personal lives by government and businesses in the United States. It has led to butchery by the armies of nasty little police states in Latin America. It has served as an excuse for American military operations against people in other countries and propaganda campaigns against governments of which American officials disapprove.

The drug war, like other wars, may be the health of the state, but it has brought only misery to millions of regular people. Government action created the modern drugs problem, and the continuing war on drugs only makes it worse. Although the politicians eventually wised up and ended alcohol prohibition, this was largely because most Americans were opposed to it and were fed up with the violence it produced. Unfortunately, most people today believe the lies spread by the government and its experts about other recreational drugs, although they are hardly different from the stories made up to justify banning alcohol. Until people wake up and reject the demonisation of currently illegal drugs and the myth of addiction, this bloody war on drugs will continue to wreak havoc around the world.

**Joe Peacott**

## Why write a Green Dictionary?

I wrote the *Green Dictionary* for several reasons. It was an excellent opportunity to spread and extend green and anarchist ideas. The media were having an 'interested in green things' phase. I found an interested publisher, running at that time on Robert Maxwell's printers pension fund money (I like to think I put some of it to good use), and to write your own dictionary has a strong ego appeal. And writing was a part of my organic farming phase. As an anarchist who cannot avoid involvement with the 'normal' world, I like to think of myself as a virus in that system. Any opportunity to change it should be taken.

At that time (1990) two things were pre-occupying me. The organic movement was not moving, indeed it was refusing to move, and the greens in general were being rather wet (Remember David Icke?) Anarchists? Largely stuck in the comfy historical-politico rut as usual. The *Green Dictionary* project was, I hoped, both a personal outlet and a means of indicating ways and possibilities forward. It was also an opportunity to try to link up various concepts, to create wholes. Holism was also rising in the general consciousness, but nobody understood what it really meant. I had got as far as understanding that it was about the relationship between things. Certainly there was much synergy in the six months' work involved.

Since then, unfortunately, there has been little fundamental change. The earnest people who believed they could go on living exactly as they had always aspired to, adjusted to the needs of the planet by recycling bottles and paper. Meanwhile, at arms length, the fascist gardening of the planet to supply their needs continued at an increasing rate. We have entered a phase now where the problems are growing faster than the answers. And people 'know' this, they just refuse to face it.

I was at a local 'current affairs' debate recently, in a minority of one as usual. The argument against my concerns was that more people had a better life now than at any time

before, and all this talk of change and anarchism would just upset things for no good reason. A picture of a burning candle came into my mind. As it got near the end, the bowl of the candle stick filled with molten wax. The flame gradually burned brighter and brighter until it was brilliant. Then it suddenly went out, extinguished by its own excess.

I do not know where we are in candle power today, but I am certain that our traditional and very reasonable actions to convert individuals to anarchism and / or green concerns is not by itself a viable tactic. It will simply not be fast enough to avoid the winner of the race amongst catastrophes queuing for the first place. Of course we have to continue trying to convert individuals to our view of anarchist evolution. But evolution can be about more than this. It has three major modes; stasis, where slow changes may happen such as that we are achieving; sink, where a species may fail and disappear; and shift, where a relatively sudden change occurs. It is the shift mode I believe we should focus on.

The conditions for a human evolutionary change are gathering. Pressure of numbers, neoteny, and a successor active in the wings. I believe Rupert Sheldrake was right in his suppositions about communication fields working in life forms other than ones which we recognise. These may be a means if we can focus anarchistic beliefs into the wider world. The task before us is novel. If we are to both achieve our objectives of freedom and save enough of the human species for it to continue, we have to create an act of consciously directed evolution. Ideally by achieving a global mind-shift.

Anarchy, and all it implies in practice, is the key, the first step in conscious evolution. If we fail the scenario is one often rehearsed in science fiction; institutional clones GM engineered for their lives inside terra-formed domes, where the institutional forms extend their life into unknown futures. Outside the sinking remnant of humanity wastes away. Unbelievable? What are the options then?

Anti-globalisation may seem like a good target for protest. But it is just a symptom, not of capitalism as the arch-enemy, that is simply the life blood. Anarchists have always opposed the institution of government. A good

start. But the real enemy is all institutions, all those extra-human structures that outlive us. We have to learn two things. First how to de-structure institutions, and second how to live without them. At present they control all our vital needs. If we achieve this humanity will stand on its own feet and be free at last.

**Colin Johnson**



## Book Review

### HOW TO BE FREE

Tom Hodgkinson, Penguin, (2007) £7.99

*[Fear] is actually rather convenient to the smooth functioning of an orderly society. A docile population which is terrified of the authorities in their various forms, whether supermarket, bank, school or boss, and afraid of other human beings, will more likely depend on objects and institutions to give them guidance, solidity, security and a sense of meaning. If you are fearful, then you are unlikely to riot and very likely to work hard and spend hard. (pg 129)*

Freedom is one of the most abused of words in the English language. Market forces have reduced this enormously complicated word to a kind of bait, a way of oiling through a sharp business transaction. With offers of free holidays, free mobiles or free gifts the word has been made tacky and shallow.

We live in a self-defined free society. But in truth, it's a society that pretends freedom doesn't exist. While the state merrily imposes ASBOs, ID cards, CCTVs and police raids

we can depend on the media to constantly remind us that we live in a free society.

*Freedom* is both a fragile and a complex entity. It is essentially untidy, hesitant, sometimes violent, unpredictable and guaranteed neither to stand still nor proceed in any given direction. The fact that *freedom* refuses to stay static for any length of time makes defining it so difficult. By the time you've caught a glimpse it has already moved on. Such a lack of stability means *freedom* is a concept open to abuse. So sickly has it become that it can no longer stand on its own. It needs help. And it needs it fast.

Yann Martel in his Booker Prize novel: *Life of Pi*, gives a superb example of the concept of freedom. He writes of caged animals in a zoo and of what happens if some joker decides to release them by opening the cage door. We learn that the animals, rather than heading straight for the forests and the plains, are more likely to cower in the nearest patch of safety. Martel draws an analogy with patrols of black-leathered agents kicking in the front doors of peoples' homes screaming: "GO! You are free! Free as a bird! GO! GO!" The lesson from Mantel is that *freedom* cannot be imposed upon anyone. It is true that benevolent power-centred authorities can choose to make conditions easier for people but no single power group can give people freedom.

Accordingly, *freedom* is meaningless without the verb *Achieved* firmly attached to it. *Freedom* can only be achieved by your own hands and through your own experience. Examples abound. You may achieve a *freedom* by saying NO to somebody or by giving up a job or deciding not to use a car again.

Tom Hodgkinson's book is on hand to describe how the option to choose *freedom* crops up in every aspect of our lives. His book is a refreshing release for Anarchists otherwise mired down in resentful tomes or earnestly serious dictates on class struggle. Hodgkinson invites his readers to declare themselves willing to take on their own revolution. As a project it means taking responsibility for your own life. It is you who must choose to react to the events of everyday life. In one sense the book is updated hippy-speak from the glorious sixties. But Hodgkinson persuasively refers to early philosophers, suggesting that the message is timeless.

What is it that prevents you and I from taking on responsibility for the consequences of our actions? Why are you and I enslaved to exorbitant mortgage repayments or glued to a TV or find ourselves too busy to play with the kids? The lesson is simple; the more we take on this project the less we rely on the false security of the market state.

And Hodgkinson is no slouch in practising what he preaches. He regularly finds himself threatened by bailiffs and visits from the Inland Revenue. He is in court on charges arising from an attitude that sticks two fingers up at all revenue-seeking authorities. Although a strong existentialist theme threads itself through the book Hodgkinson is at pains to emphasise that an anarchist society is one set firmly in a social setting (as Herbert Read once said - Freedom isn't much use to you if you're alone in the middle of the Pacific).

This is a witty and well-written ride through the perils of everyday life. It comes with a song from the heart, a heigh and a ho and a skip and a fall. The most pleasurable book I've read on anarchism in years.

Peter Good

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## Anarchy in fashion?

My personal compromise with the global coffee racket takes me to the local Oxfam store quite regularly. Recently the window display caught my eye. The usual plates, crocks, glass wear and tastefully arranged second-hand books, were casually backed by a couple of screwed up younger person size t-shirts. Of a sort of yellowish-orange colour, the fronts boldly carrying in black the (A) symbol.

Of course everything can be food for fashion. I wondered how much the manufacturers, the retail chain, and the parents, knew anything of the meaning of the symbol. Perhaps one parent did, hence the appearance in Oxfam's window. I believe (almost) any publicity is to be welcomed, and congratulated the shop ladies on their tasteful window display.

The appearance of anything to do with anarchism does not appear on clothing for the older person, as far as I know. Sure, there are usually some sporting tasteful black or red and black outfits at most gatherings, but nothing much in everyday terms. If anarchism appeals at all, it is more often to the trendy boutiques in the minds of emerging young adults. The blend of (false) reputation, the hints of rebellion, and the desire for freedom can make up a heady cocktail which may be just what they think they are looking for.

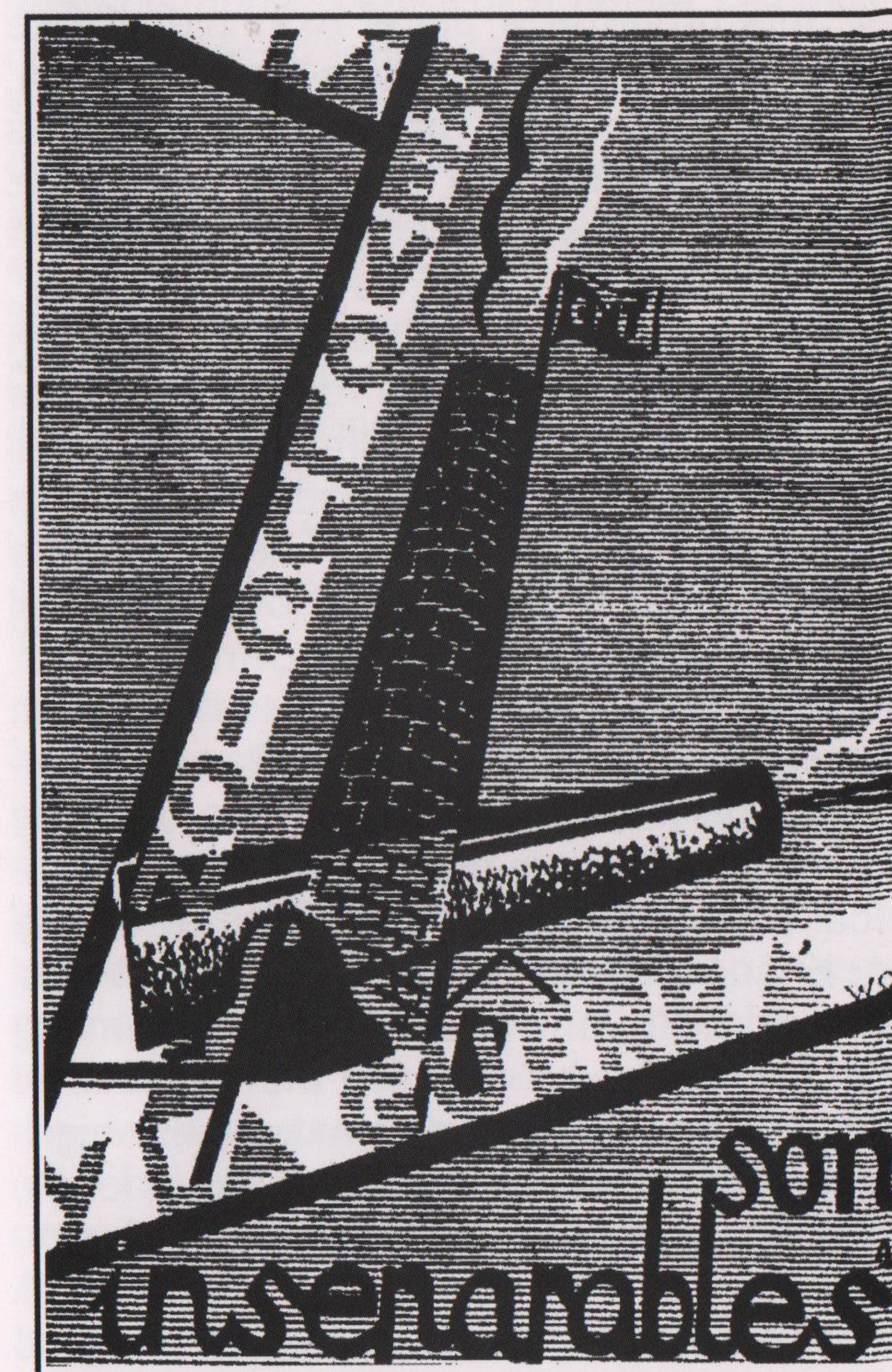
Colin Johnson

'Come and Join us!  
or 'So this is where  
the lefties are!'

As anyone who is half familiar with anarchists and anarchism will know, the Spanish Civil War, 1936-39, has a special place in the convoluted arguments that will split any two anarchists into three factions. And that's before one adds Trots, and half-Trots into the picture. The tragic history of Spain in the mid-twentieth century contains

within it the tragic history of the Spanish anarchist movement, largely represented by the CNT and the FAI - the Confederación Nacional de Trabajo (the anarchist trades union), and the Federación Anarquista Ibérica (the Iberian anarchist federation). Although the anarchists were strong in parts of Catalonia, Andalucía, Murcia, Valencia, and Galicia, the immediate outcome of the Generals' Revolt in July, 1936, left the Catalan anarchists as the main surviving protagonists of their ideology. Church burnings and killings notwithstanding, the anarchist militias were to the forefront of creating and defending a revolution in the areas they controlled.

But in May 1937, the anarchist revolution



was crushed, not by the reactionary forces of Franco, but by the communists. That story was famously told by George Orwell in *Homage to Catalonia*, and much later filmed by the SWP partisan, Ken Loach, as *Land and Freedom* (the title of the main anarchist newspaper). It is history that is still bitterly fought over today, with Trots rehearsing their perennial analysis of revolution betrayed, communists and their fellow travellers arguing that the anarchists were undermining an

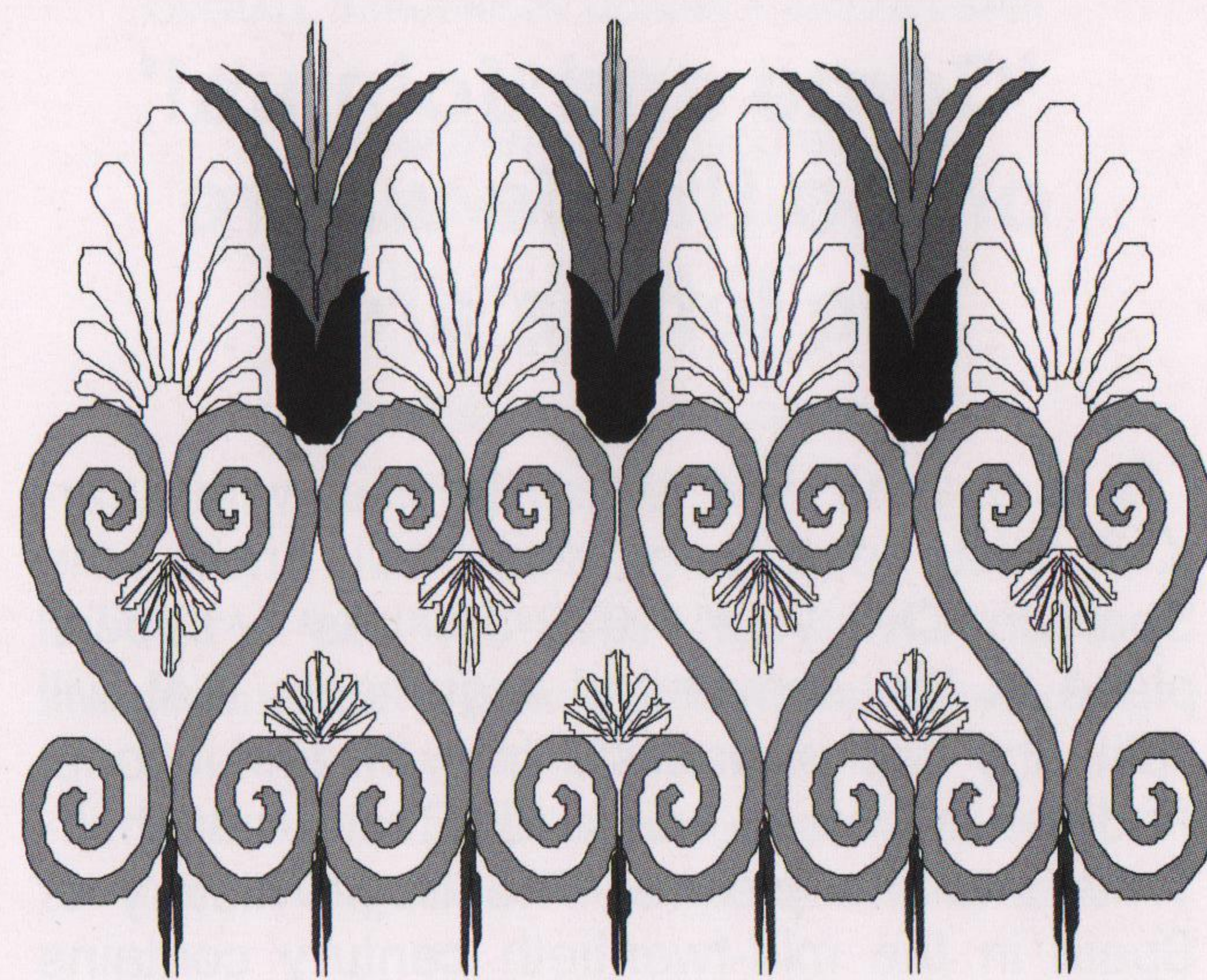
anti-fascist struggle, and anarchists arguing about just how anarchist the Spanish anarchists really were. Whatever the truth, the story is right up there with the history of 'propaganda by deed', Nestor Makhno and his partisans, or the crushing of the Kronstadt uprising by the Bolsheviks. Without doubt, it is another case of bitter, seemingly endless argument on the left.

However, there is one happy band in England where these arguments are put to one side, and lefty types of various persuasions gather together throughout each summer to remember the struggles in Spain, and the role of international volunteers - anarchists, communist, socialist, and anti-fascist. Further, this group is a prime example of free association, good fellowship, co-operation, and education. The group in question is called *La Columna*, and it is part of that large, amorphous movement known as 'Living History', 'Historical Theatre', or 'Re-enactment'. Many people will have heard of, or even seen, the most well-known representation of historical re-enactment - the English Civil War re-enactors of 'The Sealed Knot', or 'The English Civil War Society'. These are the people that often appear at a local historical site to re-enact battles of our own civil war, and portray life and times in the seventeenth century. But the English Civil War aficionados are only the very tip of the re-enacting and living history ice-berg. The range of historical events portrayed is vast - from 'The Flint Knapper' (stone age man) to 'Star Wars' re-enactors (a particularly odd bunch among an eccentric movement), via the Romans in Britain, Tudor dancers and musicians, highwaymen, Napoleonic troops of all varieties, 1940s housewives, and medieval metalworkers.

*La Columna* has been in existence since 2000, and is a small group dedicated to portraying international volunteers for Spain. This year, we have portrayed anarchist militias running a (steam) railway station, British International Brigaders and volunteer medical staff around the time of the battles of Jarama and Brunete, striking tram workers in the 1926 British General Strike (with real trams!), Asturian miners in 1934, and Spanish Civil War veterans training British Home Guard at Osterley Park in 1940. At all our events we meet thousands of members of the public,

who are eager to hear about the events, people, and places we portray. People come to us with their family memories of the Spanish Civil War, or they sometimes come to us with no knowledge at all of the events, ideologies, and people involved. We talk to them, hand out leaflets about the events we are portraying, and show them our equipment, period clothes and artefacts. It is a fantastic way to talk in a relaxed and easy-going way about matters that most people never talk about, including politics with a capital 'P'. But if that all sounds like hard work, it is only part of the story, as being a re-enactor is a great way to camp out (in period tents), have long weekends away from work and the diurnals of everyday life, cook over open fires, sit out under the stars when the public have gone, and drink, smoke, talk, sing, and tell jokes together. *La Columna* is organised in a perfectly flat, non-hierarchical fashion, and we all pitch in. Decisions are taken by the whole group, and new members are elected to our ranks by general consensus. Our political backgrounds run from anarchist to communist (we are the proud possessor of a single Marxist-Leninist, but no-one minds!), with agnostics in between. It is a relaxed, friendly, and open group. So, if you have a passing interest in history, feel that you may be slightly eccentric, would like to respond to people's interest in the Spanish tragedy, then, as the Salvation Army used to sing - 'come and join us!' Details are to be found on *La Columna's* website [www.lacolumna.org.uk](http://www.lacolumna.org.uk)

Steve Cullen



## AN ANARCHIST CREDO

- **Anarchism** is not terrorism or violence and Anarchists do not support, aid or sympathise with terrorists or so-called liberation movements.
- **Anarchism** does not mean irresponsibility, parasitism, criminality, nihilism or immorality, but entails the highest level of ethics and personal responsibility.
- **Anarchism** does not mean hostility toward organisation. Anarchists only desire that all organisations be voluntary and that a peaceful social order will exist only when this is so.
- **Anarchists** are resolute anti-statists and do not defend either "limited states" or "welfare states".
- **Anarchists** are opposed to all coercion.
- **Poverty**, bigotry, sexism and environmental degradation cannot be successfully overcome through the State. Anarchists are therefore opposed to taxation, censorship, so-called affirmative action and government regulation.
- **Anarchists** do not need scapegoats. Poverty and environmental destruction are not ultimately caused by transnationals, IMF, the USA, the "developed world", imperialism, technology or any other devil figure, but are rooted in the power to coerce. Only the abolition of coercion will overcome these problems.
- **Anarchism** does not posit any particular economic system but only desires that the economy be non-coercive and composed of voluntary organisations.
- **Anarchists** are not utopians or sectarians, but are sympathetic to any effort to decrease statism and coercion and the replacement of authoritarian relations with voluntary ones.

Larry Gambone



## What is individualism?

There are a number of misconceptions about individualists widespread in the anarchist movement which hinder discussion of the ideas of individual freedom. They are seen by many collectivist anarchists as greedy capitalists who simply wish to get the government off their backs so they can more easily rob the helpless workers. Additionally, they are often viewed as uncaring about the problems of anyone other than themselves, and totally opposed to cooperation between people. These are myths which need to be dispelled before any worthwhile dialogue can take place between the collectivists and the individualists.

Individualists feel that the way to maximize human freedom and happiness is by abolishing not just the state, but all other involuntary relationships and organizations as well. Although I reject mandatory participation in any organisation or society, I am not opposed to cooperation between free individuals to better satisfy their desires and needs. I oppose the welfare state and support private property, but encourage interested people to voluntarily help others in need of assistance. And, while I oppose any restrictions on voluntary economic activities, I am opposed to the theft of the labour of others, which is called profit. I feel that people's desires can be fulfilled, and a just society achieved, without the oversight of either the state or the community.

The individualist view of the person is quite different from that of the collectivist. The individualist views people as responsible agents who, even in present-day, unfree society, have to take at least partial responsibility for the situations in which they find themselves, and therefore are capable of changing their