

## LETTERS

Dear TL

I write to question some of Joe Peacott's article, The Drug War is the Health of the State (TL Autumn / Winter '07) where "the addiction hypothesis", as he calls it, is denied.

Connections are made by Joe about the state's need to renew its powers with phoney wars like the "war on drugs .....used to justify warlike government action...." hypocritically ignoring the dangerous substances it raises revenue on. Other examples are given, with which most anarchists would agree. With all the concern about "drugs", the authorities seldom ask why so many seek escape from painful reality into substance-based phantasy. In failing to follow such inquiry, our masters favour a method of social control called "blaming the victim" --- as if to say "oh dear, another druggie o.d. suicide, too bad they could not fit into the commoditised open prison". But Joe's suggestion that "marijuana and coke are (not) dangerous ... in unknown ways", and that heroin is not addictive ".....but a voluntary act over which (we) have control", is wrong.

It is interesting to see how much poison the body accumulates before trouble starts. You can go for years hooked on refined white sugar, alcohol or nicotine. It depends how your body is and all the stuff going on in there. But it does seem that smoking too much grass over too short a period (whatever it may be) can lead some people to have "the horrors" or as the medics call it "drug induced psychoses", while other big-puffers get no such problems. Legalisation of pot would give quality control of that substance and much decrease the "Russian Roulette". But this point leads us to look at physiology (the way our bodies work), not just socio-politics.

We need to distinguish between injurious physical dependence, psychological dependence, and physical dependence for basic maintenance. The latter is seen when we are too tired, cold or hungry, which does not mean that we are addicted to sleep, warmth and food. Psychological dependence means having stuff we feel better having. It might mean that you are comforted with chocolate or having your mobile with you 24-7; you are not addicted to sweets or communication but like any dependence it can be taken to unhealthy extremes. Alcoholism is an example of how a psychological dependence can become an injurious physical dependence or addiction - witness the physical pain of those who are trying to "dry-out" (or go "cold-turkey", trying to quit heroin or nicotine). Some can manage it easier than others, just as some find certain substances more problematic than others. Joe suggests that heroin is a recreational drug whose use can be kept at a safe level. There may be those who can be safe with it (or think they can). But the ruined lives heroin causes are as much due to state repression, using authoritarian solutions to overcome problems caused by authoritarianism, as the physiological fact of injurious physical dependence.

Martin S. Gilbert

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# MUTUAL AID

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## EDITORIAL

The fallout from the 'credit crunch' rumbles on. Most ordinary people will not be too concerned at the losses felt by millionaires, bankers and city corporations, but the savings and job losses, and the resultant financial pain is a source of worry to millions of ordinary people, homes are being lost and lives severely disrupted. The ideologues of the left and the right have lost little time in either reasserting or defending their respective dogmas with the Marxists, Socialists, et al claiming the situation justifies renewed statist responses in controlling and managing the markets and society.

Meanwhile the real concerns of ordinary people are about whether they can continue to put food on the table, to pay the bills or the rent or mortgage, or whether their local health, education and social services will continue. Those near retirement worry whether they will receive a decent pension when they retire. Much absurd nonsense has been written, printed and spoken comparing the current recession with that of the 1930s. Most people in the west are not now suffering in the manner they did in the mid 1930s, when for example in Earlstown, Lancashire, a town not far from the Wigan of George Orwell's Road to Wigan pier, one third of children in a local primary

school died as a result of the effects of childhood illnesses, and of the side effects of poverty and awful living standards. However, the current 'credit crunch' risks seeing the return of real malnutrition among the most vulnerable people of society, those below the poverty line, and pensioners facing the choice each winter between keeping warm or eating. The State has decided to spend billions in saving the banks while failing to maintain adequate welfare benefits or maintain health, social services and education. In the long term Anarchists need to work to develop effective alternatives to the welfare state if we are ever to be taken seriously.

Of course in parts of the third world there are currently awful levels of disease, malnutrition and starvation. Other factors such as the growing power of the state, incessant warfare and environmental destruction are also disastrous in their effects in these regions. However, these conditions existed before the current financial crisis and are likely to continue afterwards despite the best (or worst) efforts of governments, campaigning groups in the west, aid agencies and charities. These are the side effects of the Global Corporate Capitalist State system. Sadly individuals can have little real influence on such juggernaut systems and institutions. Despite the wishes of some comrades, we are not likely to see a revolution in western countries. However, individuals can have a positive effect in their own communities and localities by campaigning and acting locally. By joining local organisations such as Food Co-ops and supporting Housing Co-ops, by supporting community projects and local small scale and community businesses. We can make some difference by acting locally and by example to support and create the framework of a new society within the increasingly shoddy and polluted remains of the old. This is a positive role for Anarchists, to be active in our communities and to make a difference in the only places we can, our communities and workplaces.

This will be the last edition of TL under its present name, as of the next edition the title will be *Anarchist Voices Magazine* to match our website, otherwise the editorial policy and type of content will remain unchanged. All existing subscriptions will continue.



## Compensation Culture

**M**uch is made of the compensation culture where one person/group sues another and makes a lot of money in the courts. As with all government arrangements, such issues arise out of a professed attempt to "do good" for the public, when their involvement is nothing of the sort.

The idea of compensation for injury is not new in a government structure. Anglo-Saxon courts in the early Middle Ages had a system of allowing money for loss of limb, the amount depending on what had been lost, so that a toe was cheaper than an arm. But it is only in modern times that poorer people have been able to make claims for injury, with the introduction of the welfare system and legal aid. But even that was limited to those who had little or no income and were therefore the ones with the lowliest jobs, so that compensation for their loss of livelihood and quality of life was not deemed to cost the employers, insurance companies etc. very much.

Recent years have seen large-scale claims for industrial injury occur as workers, such as those in coal mining, made combined claims, some lawyers operating on the now-accepted way of no win, no fee to help those who could not otherwise claim legal aid. Such cases, even using the government machinery of the courts, hit the power bases where it hurt – in their pockets. Partly as a result, working conditions did improve and the government was obliged to introduce more health and safety measures.

All this has come at a personal price for those whose lives were compromised because greedy and corrupt employers did not care what happened to their workers. It is interesting to note how quickly government stepped in to bail out useless and greedy banks whereas improve-

ments for the workplace took many years to achieve. Life is still very cheap in modern government eyes.

But from these workers' cases, the courts have allowed people to make claims for the most trivial of matters. In itself, cases where neighbour sues neighbour because they don't like the size of their privet hedge seems laughable and if they want to spend their money in this way, then it's up to them. But these kind of compensation claims come at a price which people do not realise hurts them.

From the start, any appeal to government or its structures is a weakening of the individual's ability to sort out problems within their own community. Were people left to themselves, living in communities which operated mutual aid, they would resolve such issues, which may not arise in the first place if people realised that people matter more than things.

In the case of the workers' claims, in the absence of any kind of insurrection, they were left with no option but to use the government machinery as it was in essence, government and its acolytes of industrialists, financiers, aristocracy etc. which allowed a workplace system to develop in which the individual had been injured.

However, life is not without risk. There are such things as the vagaries of life which happen without government. So, for example, I slip and fall as I am walking across a stream in the depths of the countryside. Just "one of those things" and hopefully, little injury results. Visiting friends and being scratched by their cat is another one.

But modern government has now led people to believe that the Great God Money is the answer to all of people's problems and anxieties. So in the examples above, I could be encouraged to sue the walking boot manufacturer for selling deficient footwear which made me fall over in the stream or the landowner might be responsible for not putting up warning notices about the danger of crossing streams, except on a bridge. Similarly, the cat-owning friends may be negligent for not restraining the cat.

These are ludicrous examples, but the courts are full of such cases. A woman who had just bought a camper van was driving it down the motorway. The van had been advertised as "automatic" and so she left it travelling as she went in the back to make a drink. No prizes for guessing what happened! But she successfully sued the manufacturer of the van for compensation for not explaining clearly what "automatic" meant.

So even though the individual ends up with money in their pocket, what have they really ended up with? Well, in the cat case, probably

some ex-friends. In the other case, I've failed to take on board my own responsibility (or stupidity!) for crossing the stream. But now, it is always someone else's fault and in using the government machine to end up with money, I have alienated myself from other people, particularly those friends, who may be there to help me out in times of crisis.

Adherence to money cleaves people to the government machine. The stranglehold which it then has over lives becomes greater as it becomes the individual's "friend", leaving no room for people to band together to challenge government. In a society where all people are just government stooges, then dissention does not arise. As Murray Bookchin pointed out many years ago, "they are asleep and do not know they are asleep". With such inroads into people's lives, the sleep becomes a coma.

By severing links in communities and between individuals, government becomes the sole arbiter of personal issues. In setting friend against friend, neighbour against neighbour, government erodes the fabric of humanity which should hold us all together. It is social cohesion which helps in times of adversity, resolves trivial incidents and/or works with a structure which does not allow major problems to arise.

So the compensation culture becomes a monetary sham for buying freedom, responsibility and a supportive social network. A poor exchange indeed.

Jean Robinson

## 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 immoralism, 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.

## EVERY CHILD MATTERS

On 23rd January, pupils at the Richard Rose Academy in Carlisle went on strike, complaining of the standard of the curriculum. Disputes about Tony Blair's policy of finding sponsors to part fund 'Academy' Secondary Schools, continue. Initially, Lancashire County Council declined to take any Academies, and so the thumbscrews were put on the LEA. In late 2006, Lord Andrew Adonis, Minister for Academies, came to Lancaster. Early in 2007, it was announced that an Academy would be created on the Central Lancaster High School site. This affected the delicate ecological balance of the Lancaster school system. To make the new school viable, the humane killer was to be applied to both Skerton and Hornby High Schools. Immediately, a row started. A meeting in Lancaster Town Hall, on 19th June 2007, showed opposition to the scheme, and County Councillor Alan Whitaker was given a rough time by Left wing Labour people, educationists, and the Lancaster Green Party. Following this, no sponsor came forwards, and the Academy proposal for Lancaster stalled. Later, a troubled school in Accrington was transformed into an Academy. Another proposal, in Preston, found a sponsor in Charles Dunstone of Carphone Warehouse, who, at 83rd on the *Sunday Times* rich list was said to be worth £904M.

The proposal to close Skerton and Hornby had a negative effect. Lancaster has two Grammar Schools, Ripley St Thomas, a Church of England school, Our Lady's, the Roman Catholic school, and Central. Hornby, in the Lune valley, is seven miles out of town, and there are others in Morecambe, Heysham, Carnforth and Garstang. The fall in numbers on roll following declining birth rates does not affect the Grammar Schools, nor Ripley, which are over-subscribed; but it particularly hurts the others, especially when coupled with 'Admissions Blight' brought on by the ill-judged Academy proposal.

Hornby, a historical, picture-postcard village, is built around an old bridge across the winding River Lune. Further up the valley are hills like Whernside and Ingleborough. The village is overlooked by a castle. The tower of the church was built to commemorate the battle of Flodden (1513). On the moors above, the wind turbines turn slowly. Hornby has a population of 2,310, and the community recently rebuilt its Victoria Institute, the village hall. The village may be deeply Middle-England but the school itself is not. It is the smallest Secondary School in Lancashire, with a capacity of 300. In 2004, it had 208

pupils. As a result of the present uncertainty, numbers dropped to 142. Only eight pupils applied to start in September 2009. With more children leaving than starting, it could have less numbers on its roll than many Primary Schools. Government funding policy with regard to schools is that the money follows the children, and so, with the collapse in numbers, the funding is reduced, making the school less viable.

Most parents living in Hornby and the Upper Lune Valley do not send their children to the local school, preferring the Queen Elizabeth School, over the Cumbria border in Kirkby Lonsdale, or the Lancaster schools. Half of Hornby's pupils have Special Educational Needs (SEN). The school has followed a policy of concentrating on this aspect of its work, and pupils with behavioural problems benefit from the beauty and tranquillity of the site, and the small size of the school.

There is much more to education than mere test results or league tables, however, another factor in the mix is the Government's 'National Challenge'; a hit-list of 638 schools falling below 30% of pupils attaining 5 or more grades A\* to C in their GCSE's. Hornby achieved 28% in 2007, and 17% in 2008. Seventeen Lancashire schools fell below the line, and this, along with the collapse in admissions, would appear to seal Hornby's fate.

People are fighting back. On 9th January, parents and pupils met to oppose the closure. The 'Lancashire Locals' council meeting was petitioned. An open meeting was held on Thursday 22nd, which was opened by Headteacher, Mrs Caroline Jackson, and was packed with angry parents and distressed pupils. Councillors from Lancaster City Council and the Parish Council criticised the closure, as did Geraldine Smith, the outspoken Labour MP for the area. Again and again, parents blamed the LEA for the situation, complaining that their minds were already made up, and that advisers actively discouraged applications. One lady compared the affair with the attempt to close the Settle to Carlisle railway in 1987. It became obvious when the pupils spoke that the school is doing good work. The Government plan to impose Academies and to trample down small schools like Hornby is really an attack on diversity.

Stephen Booth



# Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Song Writing but were Afraid to Ask...

What an awesome brute of a subject to tackle. So let's begin by my saying that there are certain elements of writing songs that I can't teach! Good start eh?! I can give a few pointers and make a few suggestions but I'm not sure I can 'teach' anyone how to write a song. I do believe however that it's something that we are all capable of doing: If you can play an instrument, write music, sing, use your voice or use your mind, then I think you can write songs! You maybe just need a little imagination or inspiration. You don't even need to be able to play a musical instrument or have a decent singing voice (if you're going to perform the songs you write) as you can always sing them unaccompanied, recite them as performance poetry or have someone perform your songs for you.

Successful or acclaimed songwriters will tell you that it is incredibly difficult to write songs. This is because they make lots of money from doing so. That's their job. I'm not saying they don't slave over their works or work tirelessly over their compositions, I can only tell you about my experiences. I can tell you about the songs I've written and the way they're constructed. I can't tell you how to have a 'hit record', how to make lots of money or how to gain a gold or platinum disc. Basically, I have no knowledge of these things!

The songs which I write are about my own experiences and the world around me. My ideas, opinions, thoughts, fears, hopes, celebrations... whatever! I write about anything that I come into contact with that inspires me to write. It can be my personal inner-most feelings or a general view on a social topic. My only limitations are that I only write from experience or instinct rather than choosing a subject I have little knowledge of. I don't write to order and I tend to write when creativity urges or inspiration happens.

During my time of playing concerts and making recordings, I have been labelled everything from a folk singer to 'folk punk', 'anarcho-folk', 'social

comment singer songwriter' to 'protest singer'... and that's just the polite descriptions! It doesn't matter really, the labels serve a purpose sometimes and hinder at other times but I digress... I just happen to be white, male, working class, employed, politically aware, an anarchist, love my friends and family, like football, good music, bird watching and causing a fuss in the name of protest, resistance and freedom. None of these descriptions are important as such, they're just a selection (off the top of my head) of the millions of labels and descriptions that make up what I am and therefore whether sub-consciously or not, some are going to influence or shape the ideas that I have and the songs that I write. I can't write about sleeping with hundreds of women, driving expensive cars, holidaying on luxury yachts or being rich even if I wanted to because they're subjects that are alien to me. I stick to what I know and what (to me) matters.

So, if we're agreed that I write only from experience, I then have to decide what

subject I shall sing about when putting pen to paper (or plectrum to guitar strings). For me, this happens in a variety of ways. There's literally billions of inspirational stuff hitting me from all angles usually. The songs can come from watching news reports, reading newspapers, talking to people or just walking out of my front door. Seeing the world around me is inspiration in itself and I can be inspired as much by the things I disagree with than all the likeminded souls I meet in life. Sometimes my songs can be about reaffirming my opinions, ideals and beliefs and at other times they're not providing any answers at all but are asking questions rather than providing any solutions.

The songs I write can be happy, celebratory, confident, cheerful, inspiring and optimistic. They can also be sad, frustrated, unhappy, angry and full of fear. I've never claimed to be an expert on anything; I'm just a writer of songs! The subjects can be a personal struggle, about nothing in particular or a global issue. It's entirely up to the



songwriter! The style in which you write your song though is very important. You can write about something that makes you feel sad, angry or frustrated but by using humour to deal with the tragedy, you may get your point across in ways you never thought were possible. Remember, there are no rules and no limitations to what you yourself have to adhere to.

The music. Again, I can only speak from personal experience, about the songs that I have written and the way they are constructed. Sometimes I've been inspired to write the words/lyrics first. The inspiration will flow and I'll have a page full of words, ideas, sentences, verses etc but no music. I can then put a tune to those ideas by jamming on the guitar or having a tune in my head and deciding on a tempo, key, chord changes and melodies that gel with the words written as I work to make the song come alive. On the other hand, I may have a tune in my head or be playing my guitar when purely by chance; I create something I think sounds interesting. I can progress with it, write it down, record it for future reference or even store it in the back of my mind (with a million other tunes that will probably never be remembered again!) which could be used in future song writing! You never know when inspiration will hit you – perhaps you could keep a notepad and pen with you whenever possible? Or maybe a small recording/tape machine? Some people keep rhyming dictionaries and other wordy books close to hand. It's up to you! If you are having trouble with your song, show it to a friend or fellow songwriter. Perhaps they could help? Perhaps you can write good tunes but struggle with the words? Or maybe it's the other way round? Whatever the problem, sometimes a joint effort/collaboration can be just as rewarding. My advice would be to listen to lots of different songs, singers and styles. Read people's lyrics. See how they scan the words to fit with the music. Look at how many verses there are. How the songs are constructed such as verse/chorus/verse etc. Look at the rhyming and the word play or perhaps there is no rhyming at all - and yet – shock horror! The song still works perfectly!

To conclude, I again admit that I can't teach you 'how to write a song' but I can say, these are the methods that work for me. Practice writing your own songs and think about all the things that you would like to say. Think about anything that you would like to speak out about. What would you like to shout out loud for the whole world to hear given half the chance? Or perhaps there is something you would like to say to a particular individual? Be it personal or political, quizzical or knowledgeable and be it triumphant or duntrod-den.

You have absolutely nothing to lose and potentially a lot to gain (enjoyment, new friends, increased musical ability, inspiration, gigs which all leads to enjoyment, new friends, increased musical ability etc – it's a continuous cycle!) Be creative, be daring, break down barriers, speak out against anything you disagree with, celebrate our achievements, ignore self doubt and above all, just go for it!

Chris Butler

Chris is a singer/songwriter (for want of another description), his latest CD, Irritant was released in February 2009 on Sore Thumb Records and is available from [www.fourdogsmusic.co.uk](http://www.fourdogsmusic.co.uk) More information can be found about Chris Butler's music at [www.butler1389.fsnet.co.uk](http://www.butler1389.fsnet.co.uk) and at [www.myspace.com/chrisbutlermusic](http://www.myspace.com/chrisbutlermusic)

## Civilisation vs Civilisation and the Clash of Civilisations

The word "Civilisation" is bedeviled by ambiguity. To give a couple of examples, people talk of "Aztec Civilisation". But the sad truth is that "Aztec Civilisation" engaged in the very uncivilised practice of mass human-sacrifice. The British conquerors of India put a stop to the uncivilised institution of suttee, which, we could say, was part of "Hindu Civilisation". These two examples point up the distinction which exists between two very different concepts of "Civilisation", which aren't given sufficient attention when we use the term "Civilisation". And it is this which constitutes the ambiguity we mentioned. There is the concept of "Civilisation" as an established historical fact. I would call this "Monumental Civilisation". There is also the concept of "Civilisation" which is a kind of benchmark or ideal implicit in the notion of "civilised behaviour" or "civilised custom". This implicit benchmark applied to any historical example of Monumental Civilisation would find the idea that such a "Civilisation" was civilised extremely oxymoronic. From this point of view, so-called primitive people might have had some very civilised customs in contrast to so-called civilised people.

Although, towards the end of his book, a nod is made in the direction of civilisation as an ideal, the general thrust of Samuel P Huntington's arguments in *The Clash of Civilisations*, is in the

direction of "Civilisation" as monumental civilisation, civilisation as an empirically established historical fact. It is a concept of "civilisation" which leaves out of account the measuring rod we use to call something "civilised" - ie, in contrast with the "barbaric". Barbarism too, for Huntington, is also an established historical fact premised on the idea that human society went through a series of stages before it became "civilised". Again, it is only towards the end of his book that "Barbarism" is seen as a kind of behaviour, implying a value-judgement; otherwise, he uses the concept to refer simply to a phase of civilisation's prehistory and nothing more.

For Huntington, there is - as yet - no such thing as a universal civilisation. There are only civilisations, 7 variants of which currently exist - Western, Sinic, Japanese, Judaic, Hindu, Islamic and Orthodox. It is a moot point with him whether or not there is such a thing as African Civilisation, but he is inclined to believe there is not. I am also not sure whether he wants to add Latin America to his list of civilisations, making it 8 - or 9, if Africa was included. What is important is that all these civilisations have distinct traits and characteristics. For example,



according to Huntington, the concept of human rights belongs almost exclusively to Western Civilisation. Islamic, Hindu, Sinic and other monumental civilisations have never developed it. Aztec civilisation would certainly not have had such a concept either. However, one can imagine that the Mayan prisoners who were about to be sacrificed to their sun-god, felt that their human rights were about to be violated. Ok, so they may never have previously entertained the notion that they had human rights, but that's only because they had never been put in that situation before. Thus, though it might be true that the concept of human rights was developed by Western Civilisation, owing to the unique histories of western societies, that doesn't mean that it is not integral to the concept of civilisation as an ideal. Civilisation as an implicit benchmark with which to judge extant civilisations not only exists, but it also has a universality about it which extant civilisations do not. Huntington would rightly deny that Western Civilisation was a universal civilisation which other, 'less advanced', civilisations were evolving towards. However, the kind of ingredients which make up the concept of a universal civilisation would surely include such things as human

rights, which, in the case of the Mayan prisoners about to be sacrificed, were being violated. They would certainly have begun to develop an implicit concept of their human rights, and those rights would be very opposed to the 'rights' of those who were about to sacrifice them to their god. However, owing to the nature of their predicament, they were in no position to develop that concept and make it explicit.

When it comes to extant civilisations, we must recognise that each is particular and each is relative. None of them are universal. Some will embed customs and mores which, when viewed

from a universal perspective, will be thought barbaric, and they will be seen to be barbaric from the point of view of other civilisations as well. There will be ways in which every extant civilisation falls short of the ideal, just as there will be other ways in which every extant civilisation fulfils it. And they will be different ways. All monumental civilisations consist of both barbaric and civilised elements. We don't judge these elements just from the point of view of our own civilisation, but from a more universal one. This more universal point of view is not arrived at by applying standards derived

from the civilisation we are familiar with, but rather from the point of view of the *Imagination*, which has a more universal perspective. It is through our imaginations, after all, that we can begin to arrive at the point of view of the Mayan prisoner about to be sacrificed and empathise with it. The trouble with Huntington is that the imagination is not his benchmark. He sees only the empirical fact of extant civilisations. A civilisation, from this point of view, is something set in stone rather than something fluid. And because of this, he sees a politics of identity emerging which revolves around these different monumental civilisations and tries to preserve them in aspic. But it can't be emphasised too often that this politics - which is largely a reaction against the all too pervasive legacy of Western Civilisation - is the only thing which sustains these monumental civilisations and that they are not sustained by their own inertial momentum.

For Huntington, these ideas have consequences. The main struggle in the contemporary world is not between ideologies but civilisations. With the 'death of communism' - another western ideology, of course - the world has not reconstituted itself according to the priorities of global

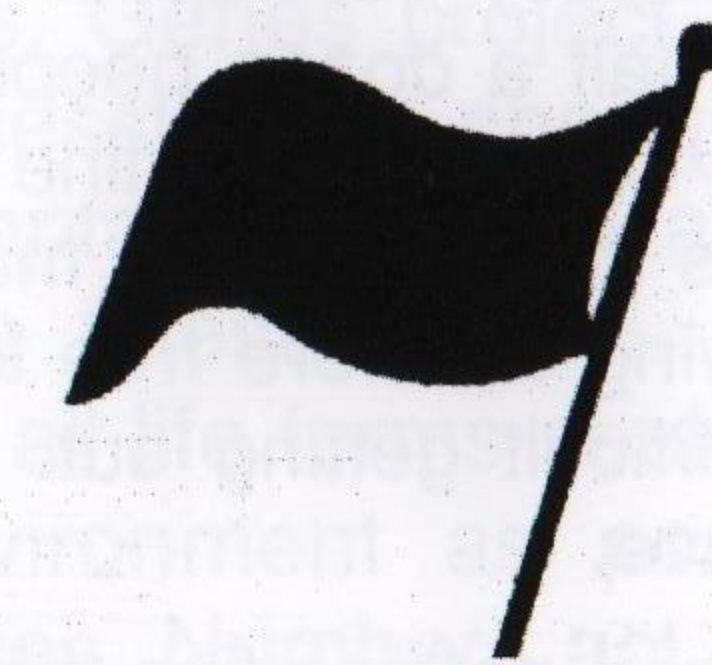
capitalism, but along civilisational lines. The fact that the identity-politics which coalesces around these notions of civilisation is a largely middle-class phenomenon, is irrelevant to him. The idea that huge proletariats are emerging in India and China which might just happen to find themselves locked in some kind of struggle with their Indian and Chinese capitalist masters doesn't seem to carry much weight with him either. No, what matters for him is that Sinic and Hindu civilisations are reasserting themselves (can we expect foot-binding and suttee to reassert themselves also?) And the fact that the largely middle-class phenomenon of Islamism is rising to the surface in the Muslim world is what finally matters, not the possibility that the proletariat and peasantry there might in time have other priorities. These don't count. They belong to the 'age of ideology' rather than that of the 'Clash of Civilisations'. In future, it will be civilisational struggles, not class-struggles, in the face of global capitalism, which will matter, and we had just better get used to the fact.

As an anarchist, I believe in "Civilisation", but the "Civilisation" I believe in is one of convivial customs, mores, manners and institutions, which have been all too often absent from historical civilisations. "Monumental Civilisation" is coterminous with war. All monumental civilisation, without exception, have been warlike; they have emerged along with states whose *raison d'être* has been war, conquest, domination and exploitation of subjugated populations. But there have been other "Civilisations", which haven't been warlike or monumental, and seem to have done without states. The cities of the Indus Valley, for example, those of the Harrapan culture whose mode of organisation was stateless. They were civilisations, but they weren't monumental civilisations. They were more like trading centres than imperial capitals. They had no monumental architecture celebrating their power. Complex chief-taincies, rather than unified states were the prevailing political forms. They were civilisations which obviously evolved from 'pre-civilised' societies in a natural way. They were not the result of conquest or subjugation. Evolution is the key word to describe their genesis. They are the only true civilisations, because the others are all imposed and artificial in nature.

The "Civilisations" discussed by Huntington are all monumental civilisations. They will have their convivial and human aspects, of course, but they will also have their un-convivial and inhuman ones, because they are products of conquest and war. Elsewhere, I have used the image of the stone thrown into the pond and the ripples it creates, which slowly die down and disappear. The first monumental civilisation can be likened to the aftermath of the shock of that stone hitting the

water. Over the millennia, the ripples have been very slowly subsiding, but they haven't subsided completely. Only when they have subsided completely, will civilisations be able to resume their natural evolution, without threatening each other, which will only be when they are completely convivial and human, stateless and organised along non-coercive anarchist lines. Anarchy, in other words, and full civilisational evolution are two different terms for each other. To be sure, civilisations will still be unique. They will still have their Western, Islamic, Orthodox, Japanese, Judaic, Sinic, Hindu, Latin-American and African features, but these features will be softened, because the political forms which were instrumental in generating conflicts between them will no longer exist. This to me is only way humankind will ever get beyond *the clash of civilisations*, which is the subject of Huntington's book.

Richard Livermore



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# MESSAGE FROM THE FRONT

## The April 1st G20 Protest

Let us just say I am of a certain age, a member of the Para-Military Wing of Age Concern. I've always found Anarchist uniforms to be drab with many peeps looking as though they dressed in front of a propeller that very morning. Each day I dress to look like a pox-doctor's clerk: Bow-tie, waist-coat, watch and chain, shoes polished to regimental standard. And was it only a month ago a young barmaid said I had lovely silver hair? Hence, I was a trifle worried over police warnings given to bankers to "dress-down" during the protest.

I travelled down from Bradford and loitered around the entrance to Liverpool Street Station an hour before one of the Four Horses of the Apocalypse was due to lead us in parade. Lots of people waiting around. Lots of camera crews. And, hands tucked into lime-green flak-jackets, lots of groups of police engaged in bravado gossip. In amongst the traffic a long line of cyclists be-decked in colourful flags noisily float by. Score upon score of police vans with darkened windows are parked everywhere.

The horse appears. A flimsy contraption of canes and black silk carried by half a dozen peeps. But we were off. Round the first corner and a line of police formed across the road as the bulk of the march went through. A policeman saying we were free to join the protest but it might be difficult getting out. We were marching into our own grave.

The buildings in The City – nothing like this in Bradford – loom high in the air. Many of the ground floor windows are boarded up. Visible in the higher windows are groups of dressed-down bankers. One or two begin to wave banknotes. It's a provocative act and the march responds appropriately. Somewhere down Threadneedle Street the march slows and stops. The chants and the shouting begin. From my waistcoat I take my tiny black flag. I've had it some years and am quite proud of it. The flag measures no more than a credit card and it's held up by a silver six-inch flag pole. As soon as I begin waving this in the air the press close in. Someone who says he's from the BBC wants to interview me. I decline saying the BBC is just part of the Machine. But the reporter says the BBC wants to hear your voice; wants to know why you are here? I ask when did the BBC last put out anything even remotely sympathetic to Anarchism? From today, he taunted, from today. The BBC really wants to hear your case. This is good news and I ask to see the change in policy. But he moves on. One must exercise caution with so many people carrying journalist's note books and asking for names and reasons. I swear I saw one who was wearing a pair of copper's boots.

The horse is now charging back the way we had came. I am swept up by the energy. Outside the Royal Bank of Scotland a three-deep line of riot police halts us. They are not pleasant people. Much pushing and

shoving. I'm about ten-feet from the front. I don't have much choice. I can't move and I can't see. Some folk engage in the dangerous-looking practice of climbing up the sides of buildings. They shout down to the crowd what is happening. Suddenly, and for no apparent reason, the police push us back a few feet. I get glimpses of the police line. Young constables, tanked up on testosterone, mired in canteen culture, dressed in padded day-glow-uniforms, only too easily provoked into lashing all and everything with batons and the rims of riot shields. From the crowd, the occasional apple, bottle, or red flair gets thrown. The crowd are penned in. Across the road from me the offices of the Royal Bank of Scotland have plate glass windows that are not boarded up. Inevitably, the sound of breaking glass. Again I hear rather than see. But the running commentary is that we have people inside and a couple of computers come crashing out onto the road.

Then we have real horses. Sent in to reinforce the police line. They look strangely medieval. Big men with glistening visors sitting atop. The batons and shields take on a new vigour. People are getting hurt. I think what kind of person can bring themselves to smash a baton into someone's head when they are holding arms up in surrender? These people are no more than state gangsters buttressed by a tacit legal sanction. There is another hour of pushing, shouting, being crushed, catching glimpses of quite awful violence. Eventually – I'm not good on my legs these days – I make it away from the front and suddenly realise how big this protest actually is. Up and down these huge city venues there are thousands milling up and down. Away from the front it is more carnival that confrontation. Every facet of anti-globalisation has a presence. The 9/11Truthers have a rap band in good voice, the trans-sexuals, the Free Tibetans, CND, various Marxist abbreviations. Some women have wrapped a large banner around a grid and the women use it as a loo. Men are starting to piss against the freshly graffitied walls of world-renowned banks. After four hours people are getting tired. Every street is cordoned off. A woman appeals to the police to be allowed home to collect her children. She is told to ask up at the other end. But she has been there and told to ask here. Someone with a cut forehead is sitting at the feet of one line of police. He needs one of the ambulances parked the other side of the police. But no one is getting through.

I'm walking up and down through the throngs of people and – heigh ho! – there is a passageway guarded by well-suited heavies protecting the gateway into some prestigious offices. Remember I'm dressed as a banker. I walk confidently through them saying: "Beastly set of affairs". And I'm out on the other side.

Some observations: put simply, the police won. An excellent exercise in crowd management. Four hours after I left people were being allowed to leave individu-

ally. One by one they were pulled through a gap in the cordon. They were free to leave but only having been photographed and supplying a name and address. If they refused, back they went into the pen. The final humiliation. For coppers, as a group, it must be first necessary to de-humanise protesters. To see protesters as untermensch. You couldn't do this kind of work if you viewed people as people.

The police won because we, the protesters, carried out a predictable action. We relied solely on a historical formula of protest. A tactic the authorities have long familiarised themselves with. Doubtless, police colleges run extended seminars on crowd-control strategy. Our only weapons were bottles and cans: utterly ineffective against the police machinery. This protest has got to be a tipping point. A time to re-think mass demonstration. As a means of analysis it must be centred on the words: cunning, imagination, unpredictability.

The strategy of penning people in for several hours is based upon punitive motivation. "Kettling" as it is called, is designed to wear people down. It exists to impress upon protesters a sense of defeat. As a practice it will force all decent and thoughtful Anarchists underground. I felt genuinely angry over the mother desperate to get home. Angry over police who cautioned protesters that if they caught them urinating they would be fined £80. History has proved that when groups of people are forcibly left without water and toilets their only weapons are shit and piss. Disgruntled prisoners are known to make Blivets - socks filled with turds to be used as coshes or missiles.

As for the Anarchists? It was good to be alongside the black flags. As a movement we are normally so sectarian and petulant with one another. But here, at the sharp end of Threadneedle Street, there was a real feeling of comradeship among hardened class warriors, hippie tree huggers and middle class tossers like myself. According to the head of the Met, Commander Simon O'Brien, the cordons penning in thousands were necessary because a "group of about 200 were violent". All those coppers on triple pay must be grateful to us.

But apart from the 200 the protesters were generally peaceful. They were there to make claim that we don't return to an age of gangster capitalism. If it wasn't for the hyped-up violence no one would have listened. Despite police warnings I was not attacked as a suspect banker. I was asked three or four times was I part of the protest. Good to talk to so many people. One day we will get it right.

Peter Good

( Peter Good is a member of the editorial board of The Cunningham Amendment ).



## The Ultimate Enemy

Some hold that Anarchism is a political theory, others believe it to be a philosophy. Inevitably some consider it a political philosophy. Whatever the case it seeks to describe a way of life. Politicos hold that it is the authoritarian state which prevents it, whereas philosophers think the irrationality of humans is the greatest obstacle. But what is it that actually stops Anarchism. What is it that the state is a form of? I think we have to look at human evolution for the answer.

Let us consider evolution. Biological evolution acts in four basic ways. First, minimally by stasis, where a form of life appears to have reached a final plateau, as with sharks or cockroaches. Then by shift, where a life form undergoes rapid change to a new form; or by sink where something is heading for extinction; and by drift, the sort of gentle process humans seem to be expressing.

In classical evolution life forms change genetically to fill different environmental niches. When a more successful form evolves, the original usually sinks. Genes project many forms which are not successful. In changing circumstances the most adaptable survive, and in a stable environment the fittest survive. Whatever the circumstances, all life forms seek to convert as much of their environment as possible into replicas of themselves. Numbers act as a safeguard against unforeseen hazards in the future. Adverse circumstances and/or the pressure of numbers (which itself can generate changes), together with changes within the organism itself, produce a variety of stresses which are summarised as compression.

Human evolution is complex. Long ago we adapted to the use of tools. With all our modern advantages, we appear unable to cope with the consequences of our actions which threaten catastrophic sink. Physically we drift, although we believe we have reached a state of stasis, with the exception of our mental capacity, which is thought to have taken over the direction of its own evolution. We will be concerned with a human shift in this article.

Evolution involves the expression of inherent potential, and is characterised by the carry-over of some residual properties from previous forms. As Sheldrake (1) has argued, the process of formative causation can aid the success of new forms of life: Once things happen successfully in a particular way this accelerates the repetition of the same pattern, thus generating a dynamic stability. This stability is essential to the success of a new form of life. Nevertheless, success itself can

lead to compression, which tends to lead to further change. Thus stability, either as a lack of change or a state of more or less constant change, can be a necessary precursor of fundamental evolution. This could be either shift or sink, depending on the potential of the emerging entity. Evolution is blind. Those to whom it is happening never realise they are part of the process; even within a sink it is only experienced as individual or local failure. Could humans be any different?

Humans exist in a state of increasing compression. Climate change, excessive population, and resource shortages, are self-induced causes. The conceptual framework I am proposing is one that put down roots long before these consequences emerged. Today we hang in the balance. We find ourselves at a time when a major sink is foreseeable, yet the dynamics, of the processes we have collectively unleashed appear to be beyond our control. We do not suffer a complete blind spot, we are aware of consequences, even though we fail to adequately analyse the causes.

I argue that the evolutionary form we are projecting is the institution. We live in a world we share with so many institutional forms we have created, apparently to fulfil our needs, that they are taken for granted. Looking up the term 'institution' frequently produces '*institution for.....*'. We are given its purpose, but not what it actually is of itself. Instituting is shown as an act of founding or establishment. The most basic act given is that of instituting a person 'in care of souls' (2). We may conclude that an institution is something to which specific power has been conferred. They now form alliances which synergises their power. Can institutions be considered as life forms? They meet generally accepted criteria for life forms. They are conceived as legal persona which makes them separate from, albeit dependent upon, transitional humans. They go through processes of growth and change; they exchange energy and materials with the environment; and they can give existence to successive forms of their own kind. They can be subject to dramatic sudden death, or re-absorption from their environment by other forms. Apart from the form of reproduction practised by most complex biological life forms, it is difficult to see what characteristic of life they lack.

The human institution relationship is at the core of our multi-faceted global predicament – most notably that which concerns Anarchists. The 'care of souls' has grown beyond any spiritual requirement. There are very few people alive today who are not vitally dependent upon institutional provision. Wealthy and powerful nations depend for their position on the strength of their institutions. Multinational corporate forms of insti-

tution, acting in concert with nation states or supra-national forms, function as global conveyors, bringing the resources of the weaker nations to further enhance the richer. In return, the weaker nations are given the means to develop strong compatible central institutions.

Most of us have dual roles. When outside institutions, amid our personal relationships, we are dependent consumers of institutional provision. When inside institutional frameworks we struggle for security and increased status. Outside we are free-floating potential victims, while inside we comply with the security given by the institution's culture. Every institution develops its own culture. Note the difficulty different institutions, charged with care of 'at risk' children, have in communicating with each other. Each has its own language, even if this only amounts to attaching different meanings to the same words.

One result of the dominance of institutional forms in our general culture is that we become increasingly dependent upon them for our social relationships. Those outside institutional structures, unless exceptionally talented, tend to be the discarded members of society who live isolated and powerless lives. They have fallen through gaps in society, those considered unworthy of institutional attention.

We must go back in our discussion, first a little way, and then by analogy a long way. Institutions are dependent upon their transient human content. Large banks have a series of portraits of successive Chairmen of the Board in their upper halls. No matter how long an institution has existed, each following layer of humans fulfilling various functions complies with, and adds to, the culture of that institution. They make it the sort of animal it is, from the legal persona it expresses to the world, to the sort of being it is in its internal organisation.

Now by analogy, there is thought to have been a time on Earth, covered in its pro-biotic soup, when the features necessary for the biological cell were becoming organised. There must have been a period, of many millions of years, when emerging cells existed as open entities. They freely exchanged many of their components with the outside environment, finding more successful arrangements as time went by. Then they became closed systems. Effectively they decided what to admit and what to exclude. The big leap forward, towards life as we know it, was when they evolved the ability to divide and reproduce. The question we must resolve is this: How similar are institutions now to the open pre-cells in the pro-biotic soup? Excessive human numbers, educational competition for places inside, and the free exchange of components and resources with the environment, provide a very similar picture to

early cellular evolution. Many institutions are seeking wider elements, which could be seen as steps towards provision for closure. In some, crèche facilities are provided, some incorporate hotel facilities for their higher executives, others provide education for the children of employees. These, and no doubt many other examples, are considered very worthy. But what is the covert agenda?

At present we witness successful institutions, others failing, and/or adapting. The successful ones, with exclusive rules acting as skins, are governments, monarchies, religions, and those which command essential resources. Small business corporations tend to exhibit high rates of failure, although many develop ideas or inventions which are picked up by the bigger, more successful forms. At present, what were thought to be the strongest institutions, those in the financial world, are on life support systems provided by other institutions – which draw their power directly from us.

Institutions could become closed systems. The human content would then function much as genes in biological cells. In favourable times, this material could divide and found a new similar entity. Smaller forms could still be gobbled up by larger and stronger forms. Being of indeterminate life, institutions command ever extensive environmental resources to further their ends.

But what of humans? Would those inside remain human? As time passes they are most likely to co-evolve, away from their initial sphere of existence, to become something we would not recognise. Those outside? In evolution the original form, the one that projects the new entity into the environment, tends to fade and sink to extinction.

I asked earlier, could humans be any different? If we value our present state of biological existence, the answer must be 'yes'. Paradoxically, we could remain the same. On the other hand, if we are content to adopt a 'devil take the hindmost' attitude, the answer is 'no', and we could be carried into closed institutional forms. On the 'yes' side we must consider the capacity of our intelligence. Much time and effort is spent taking our species beyond biological nature. Could our ultimate purpose be to take us outside this subconscious trajectory of evolution? That is, to reject shift, and go for our own form of stasis. Or are we content to accept whatever path our potential has provided?

Anarchism is seeking a rift from one dominant form of institution, the state. I think we have to widen our horizon, accept the reality of our evolutionary state, and reject all institutional forms.

Colin Johnson

1. Sheldrake, Rupert. 1981 A New Science of Life: The Hypothesis of Formative Causation, Blond & Briggs, London.
2. Chambers Dictionary, 1998 edition, Harrap

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## The Function of Political Ideologies

**P**retend that you are an anthropologist from another planet, one considerably more advanced than our own. Your notion of time is also different, as you live thousands of Earth years and one hundred of these is equal to about a week of your time. You arrived three weeks (300 Earth years) ago in a place called Europe and immediately began looking for signs of civilization. At first there were none. Humans were divided into two groups, masters and slaves or near-slaves who were cruelly treated by their overlords. Women and children had no rights whatsoever, and no one cared a bit for the animals and forests. Then you discovered a tiny group who thought slavery an abomination and sought to eliminate it. "Ah, the first spark of civilization", you thought.

As your days rolled by, humans struggled in new directions, for the rights of women, for the right of the worker-slaves to organize. At the end of three weeks these human creatures had accomplished a great deal, but were far from reaching a civilized state. There were wars, people starved, the environment was devastated and vast inequality reigned. However, there was a substantial minority who yearned for the type of life that you and other ET's now almost took for granted. These civilizing factions formed different groups and called themselves reformers, eco-activists, feminists, socialists and anarchists.

Looking back on the three weeks of changes, as a social scientist, you could not help but notice that a process was occurring. Progressive change involved a number of stages and the participants played differing but effective roles in this process.

Change occurred this way: A minority, either from the worker-slaves or advanced thinkers from the upper classes, have a break-through idea, such as "Let's abolish slavery." or "Let's form a workers' union." They promote this idea through speeches, press and small demonstrations and large numbers of people are won over. The mass increases the agitation and the rulers resist making any changes. They attack the reformers and mass demonstrations, riots and strikes ensue. Ultimately, the rulers cannot stop the desire for change. At this point a group within parliament takes up the issues, often modifying the demand in the process. But they are in a minority. Finally, after an immense amount of pressure from below, which often involves people using direct ac-

tion to make the changes, parliament or no parliament laws are passed which put into practice the new way of being, i.e., slavery is abolished, women are recognized as persons, workers can unionize without being jailed, etc.

You conclude that all effective change among the Earthlings comes from below, from the masses, even though a minority might have the initial ideas. The main action takes place outside of the governmental realm and the groups who function best in this are the populists, revolutionary socialists and anarchists. Anthropologically, this is their function within Earth society – to push for mass and direct action. The final step, a form of legitimating through parliament, is the result of the parliamentary socialists and reformers. This is their anthropological function.

You soon recognize that this process only occurs within societies flexible enough to allow change. Societies that are too rigid or in a severe crisis, can only be changed through revolution. In such a situation, the mass movement from below and the ideologies related to it are even more important than before. The difference now, is that since the old system cannot continue, a new system of governance and economy has to be introduced. The populists, revolutionary socialists and anarchists are involved in the promotion of these new ways of being and defending them from those who would re-institute the old system. This is their new function. The parliamentary socialists and reformers are now a brake on such a movement and will be pushed aside if they don't stand down and join the masses. The parliamentary group no longer has a function.

Revolutions are quite rare on Earth and are usually usurped by new rulers. But this is not inevitable, you conclude, and is only a function of the underdeveloped nature of Earthling society. Earth society is on a knife edge and could either become truly civilized or fall into complete destruction. With a sigh, you hop aboard your space craft and head home to where despotism, war and inequality were abolished thousands of years (your years) ago.

Larry Gambone

### ANARCHIST VOICES VIDEO PROJECT

A website featuring short video films of Anarchists talking about their practical projects and their vision of Anarchism.

The site also hosts a page with back issues of Total Liberty magazine issues 3-23 available

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<http://anarchistvoices.wetpaint.com>

## What Anarchist Individualists Believe

**A**narchist individualists argue that the initiation of force is always unjust, and that groups of people are entitled to no more freedom of action than are individuals. Activities that are unacceptable when engaged in by one person do not become tolerable when they are engaged in by a group of people, even if that group constitutes itself as a government. If it is wrong for my neighbour to steal from me or reduce me to slavery, it is just as wrong for the state to do so in the form of taxation, the military draft, or compulsory education. Governments of all sorts are based on force, robbery, and the mandatory compliance of their subjects with the laws and regulations of the rulers. Like all other anarchists, individualists think the way to maximize human freedom and happiness is to abolish the state and all other involuntary relationships, organizations, and institutions. They believe that all people should be free to choose with whom they associate, what kind of work they do, how they dispose of the products of their labour, where they live, and what kinds of recreation they engage in. The only limit on someone's freedom of action should be the equal freedom of others to live their lives unmolested. In other words, the area in which someone may freely swing their arm ends where the nose of another person begins. Where individualists differ most from other anarchists is in the area of economics. Unlike communist anarchists, individualists advocate the private ownership of property and individual retention of the products of one's labour. This means the whole product of one's labour. Individualists reject profit as an unjust theft of the product of the labour of another, and therefore have as little in common with capitalists as they have with socialists. Individualists support tenure of land based on use and occupancy and believe rent is simply another form of profit-taking by the unproductive. People should have title only to the amount of land they can use and work themselves, but would be free to pool their resources in order to engage in larger scale operations for the sake of efficiency and greater productivity. The parties to such cooperative arrangements would still be entitled to the full product of their labour, thus generating no profit. Because the government's monopoly on the issuance of legal tender and chartering of banks artificially restricts the supply of money and increases the cost while decreasing the availability of credit, individualists advocate an entirely new banking and currency system. Mutual banks or other credit institutions

would be free to issue their own forms of money and would compete among themselves for customers, thus driving down the costs of obtaining credit to those associated with the bank's operating expenses and the salaries of the bank workers. Members of such institutions would thus be able to obtain credit without having to repay loans at the crippling interest rates now current. Interest, like rent and profit, would no longer exist, as free people with real choices would not be required to pay tribute to those who now control the money supply.

Joe Peacott

(Extract from *An Overview of Individualist Anarchist Thought* by Joe Peacott and published in the Feb 2003 edition of *The Individual*)

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