

need for a return to it, a view not dissimilar from Christian notions of the fall from the Garden of Eden.

For almost fifty pages Korten then presents a superficial review of the history of Empire over its several thousand years primarily derived from R.E. Ralph et al, Western Civilizations (1993), basically a college text. Less than half a page is devoted to India and China and nothing to South-east Asia, Japan or Africa. This is followed by approximately a hundred pages on the history of the United States which is the primary focus of the book. Here the author draws heavily upon Howard Zinn's "A People's History of the United States, 1492-Present"

After relying for half of the book on what are essentially tertiary sources Korten turns back to a more detailed discussion of the great turning and here it becomes even more of a progressive tract. He assumes the existence of a "universal spiritual intelligence" which "some call God" (308). Humans should be creating "God's kingdom on earth" (310). He desires to end Empire but has no notion of the important and essential connection between the state and empire for empire without the state is impossible. The state no matter how it is organized is still domination and not partnership. At best he wants to reform the state and make it more a "direct democracy." Further, it is not clear to what extent he would end capitalism. He is vague about the kind of economy he would have. Particularly, would he seek to end the accumulation of surplus value or profits. He is certainly opposed to large corporations, but would he tolerate small business profits? He says nothing about the legitimacy of interest taking. I am not a Marxist but it seems to me that Marx makes several good points in his critique of capitalism that should be noted by any modern critic. Korten never mentions Marx. When all is said and done this book has the saving grace of advocating a society organized around what might be considered partnership rather than domination, a kind of society I would prefer to live in rather than the present one. But the problem still remains. It does not address the heart of the issue: true partnership in a cooperative, mutualist and stateless society.

Harold Barclay

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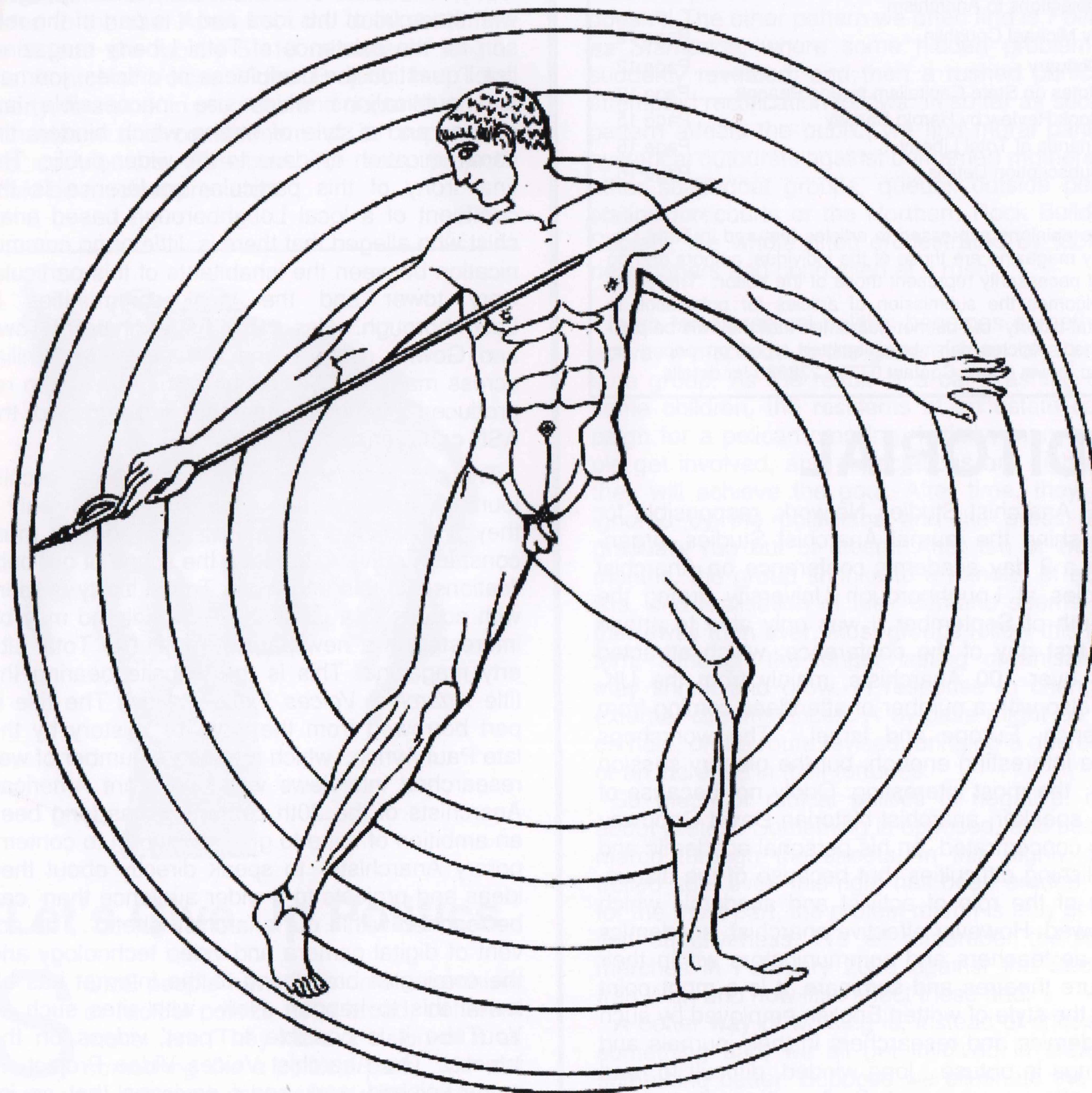
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TOTAL LIBERTY

A JOURNAL OF EVOLUTIONARY ANARCHISM

VOLUME 6 NUMBER 3

AUTUMN / WINTER 2008 £1



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EDITORIAL

THE Anarchist Studies Network, responsible for publishing the journal Anarchist Studies, organised a 3 day academic conference on Anarchist Studies at Loughborough University during the 4th-6th of September. I was only able to attend the first day of the conference, which attracted well over 100 Anarchists, mainly from the UK, but also with a number of attendees coming from America, Europe and Israel. The workshops were interesting enough, but the plenary session was the most interesting. Oddly not because of the speaker, anarchist historian David Goodway who concentrated on his personal academic and publishing difficulties, but because of the discussion of the role of activist and academic which followed. However effective anarchist academics are as teachers and communicators within their lecture theatres and seminars, it is a moot point that the style of written English employed by such academics and researchers in their journals and writings is obtuse, long winded, difficult to read and often nonsensical. Such writing is a very long way from George Orwell's concept that written English should be ...'as clear as a pane of glass'. During the course of his talk David Goodway spoke about the history of Anarchist Studies journal and announced that its subscriber base

had been around 150 to 175 copies for most of its existence. Small wonder given the sometimes unreadable nature of many of its articles. Peter Marshall, on the other hand, who subscribes to the notion that written English should be intelligible to the reader, has a more successful record in communicating the ideas of Anarchism to a wide public. His well known and well researched book on the history of Anarchism 'Demanding the Impossible' has, including the editions translated into other languages, sold over 22,000 copies. Some of the academic anarchists present pointed to the value of building a body of Anarchist ideas, available for the future. I certainly agree with the spirit of this idea and it is part of the reason for the existence of Total Liberty magazine, but I question the usefulness of articles, journals and publications which use inaccessible language and a style of writing which hinders the communication of ideas to the wider public. The final irony of this particular conference is the comment of a local Loughborough based anarchist who alleged that there is little or no communication between the inhabitants of this particular ivory tower and the local communities in Loughborough. Has the old stereotype of Town and Gown rivalries and ill feeling, so familiar across many UK University towns, now been reproduced among the Anarchist academics of the ASN conference?

There is a place for small circulation Anarchist journals, academic or non-academic, but only if they are effective communicators, and we must constantly strive to broaden the scope of our publications. To this end those Total Liberty readers with access to a computer & broadband may be interested in a new parallel project to Total Liberty magazine. This is the website bearing the title *Anarchist Voices Video Project*. The title is part borrowed from the work of history by the late Paul Avrich, which featured a number of well researched interviews with immigrant American Anarchists of the 20th century. It has long been an ambition of mine to give a platform to contemporary Anarchists to speak directly about their ideas and projects to a wider audience than can be reached within our anarchist 'ghetto'. The advent of digital camera and video technology and the coming of broadband to the internet has allowed this to happen. Now with sites such as YouTube it is possible to 'post' videos on the internet. The Anarchist Voices Video Project is not a finished work and I envisage that an increasing number of people will wish to take part. The site will feature mostly short videos about peaceful community based Anarchist projects. The website address is

<http://anarchistvoices.wetpaint.com/> and it fea-

tures over 15 different videos. There are also photographs, a Links page and a page where there are 17 back issues of Total Liberty as pdf files available for free download and an (as yet) unused discussion forum.

The videos featured include short films about Anarchist Allotments, Letterpress Printing, an Anarchist living on a canal-boat, an anarchist folk singer, an Anarchist sculptor, an Anarchist educationalist who ran an alternative school, historical re-enactors, and an activist who participates in an annual children's camp. In addition there are documentaries about Anarchism in America and Spain. As more material is created it will be added to the site. Apart from the documentaries, the videos are mostly 5 -10 minutes in length. The Anarchist Voices Video Project, like Total Liberty, is a work in progress and depends on the enthusiasm and commitment of its supporters and contributors. Feedback for both projects would be much appreciated.

JPS



Let's Give Up Politics

SOME people have a vision of anarchism or radical politics as a broad, coherent movement. They have a vision of it as something like a political party, with set ideas, yes, but more importantly, with hierarchy, leaders, members, rules, activities, compulsion, agitation, enforcement and expulsions. Quite often, they lack the practical capacity to organise this. Because it is useless, people burn out and give up, and so the rest settle for the ideology

part on its own. The organisational side is dropped. With this comes the elitist tendency towards isolation. Possessing the final truth, they are unwilling to work with others outside the fold. Yet, the ambition to become a physical organisation is present in their thinking and becomes all too apparent. Such a structure mirrors the state, which they claim they want to replace.

Lower down on the scale of problems we have is the general form and structure of politics, which is necessarily adversarial, pitting one person or party against the other. There is a competitive element present, and sometimes this degenerates into pantomime – Oh Yes it does – Oh No it doesn't! The other pattern we often find is *Politics as Stampede*, where some hidden problem is suddenly revealed, and then a rushed panic of attempted rectification follows. In so far as such a pattern affects the public, we find moral panics, hysterical outbursts against unmarried mothers or other scapegoat groups, queues outside petrol station forecourts or the Northern Rock Building Society; the whole often orchestrated by tabloid newspapers and conducted at a rush.

In so far as radical politics becomes something active, it maps on to the general form of a pressure group. As the result of a car crashing into some children, the residents of an estate campaign for a pelican crossing. Initially, many people get involved, and expectations are high that they will achieve the goal. After time, they are ignored by the politicians and the press, and gradually run out of steam. After ten or twelve months, the group shrinks to a handful of activists, and realisation of their demand seems further away than ever. Most groups follow this pattern, although the longer lasting organisations may shrink and grow, in response to changing external circumstances. A by-pass might be put on hold, or the route revised, bringing a decrease or an increase in their fortunes.

So much of radical politics is negative, it is about protest. Something is opposed, and people march through the streets. In this highly controlled age, even this right has been eroded, but for the most part, the protest march is only of limited effectiveness. We all remember the huge marches in February 2003 against the Second Iraq War, and how little effect these had.

A better way of working is, instead of criticising something bad, we all get involved in creating something better. Suppose we eliminate the adversarial pattern, drop the pressure group approach, and stop protesting. What would happen?

A better way of working is to stop trying to think of ourselves as a movement or a group, and start to consider ourselves as responsible individuals.

We need to look at ourselves, within our own particular social context, and do whatever we can to strengthen the social links which bind us to one another. If we think of the consequences of the present patterns of negative politics, we can see that they have brought few positive results. We need to change the form of our activities.

Accept some little positive change *today*, rather than shouting for, and holding out for some bigger, total change in the distant future. There are plenty of local groups you can get involved with, or people who do not belong to any particular group but who are just working by themselves to create something better. People can organise stuff for themselves, but there are also patterns to follow, like the LETs schemes. There is no need to reinvent the wheel. Something probably already exists, which might do the job, and if it does, it will be that much more effective for your involvement.

Small changes may eventually lead to larger changes, but that should not be the focus at this stage. We need to learn to walk before we can run. If you can manage to achieve one thing, this generally leads on to something bigger. Beyond this there is a slogan which is always good to remember: If we ever let politics in here, we're sunk!

Steve Booth



Towards a Liberating Technology

UNTIL recently the use and availability of powerful, innovative technology was mainly restricted to big business, associated professionals, the economic rich and other privileged individuals. Today electronic high-tech is relatively cheap and retailed off-the-shelf in high street stores and supermarkets. Information, entertainment and self-creativity can be experienced, indulged and enjoyed by all who so choose. Film-standard high definition camcor-

ders can shoot family videos to be edited on powerful computers and watched on living-room large-screen plasma TVs. Many more people are now able to be active transmitters and not just passive consumers.

Sadly, gain and loss are proving to be both sides of the same human coin. Sod's law inevitably comes into play. Now pigment inkjet and colour laser printers allow digital camera snaps of greater durability than traditional film...enabling desktop publishing to be within most recreational budgets....dispensing with the expensive use of commercial print and negative processing...freeing alternative publishing and little magazines from former restrictive monetary shackles. At this potentially liberating time, many people have largely stopped reading on a regular basis. Books, magazines and newspapers could eventually become endangered species. The text shorthand of e-mail and mobile telephony are slowly creating a significantly substantial non-literate minority.

The web, which initially unleashed a torrent of valuable information sharing, is rapidly becoming an undisciplined wild-west of big-business, sophisticated criminality, propagandist and sometimes mischievous misinformation.

Apart from opinionated internet bloggers and global media giants, information is now largely obtained from TV 24 hour news channels and their interactive text services. Only Germany continues its official support for free-to-air satellite channels (analogue and digital), most European digital television services being scrambled and subscription based. Rupert Murdoch's large UK Sky TV (and the smaller, rival cable and broadband players) have long dominated the UK satellite TV market.

As terrestrial analogue transmitters are switched off and the power of terrestrial digital is increased, more, but not all, people will be able to receive terrestrial digital Freeview. The government is however expected to auction off the freed analogue spectrum; rather than letting it help increase the quality and quantity of open broadcasting.

Luckily, for different reasons, both the BBC and ITV broadcasters broke free from the Murdoch satellite empire, some five years ago. Mister Greg Dyke had enjoyed a chance encounter with an Astra 28° E associate and discovered that there were some suitable transponders available on that platform. ITV experienced a long-running spat with Sky that couldn't be resolved mainly concerning excessive EPG (electronic programme guide) charges for regional programming. What followed was a gigantic shift in the

future direction of British telecommunications. These two dissident broadcasters then commenced to plan Freesat; an unscrambled, non-profit, alternative to the escalating Sky empire. This initiative managed a soft eighty channel launch early this year and will come full-fledged on screen with over two hundred channels sometime this autumn. As the digital switch-over progresses, a lot of uninformed people, innocent of any alternative, will reluctantly subscribe to Sky. Especially those unable to receive terrestrial Freeview. Freesat is technically superior to Freeview and also provides some high definition transmission. BBC and ITV covered the European football cup in HD. Also Wimbledon and the Olympics. Not to mention Glastonbury, magnificent nature, wildlife and sundry entertainment in seriously awesome mind-blasting transmission. Its EPG specification enables it to offer personal video recording features. A rich interactive software can take advantage of greater bandwidth and improving processing power, full HD and Dolby Digital surround sound. Its top-set boxes include USB and Ethernet ports. New software is periodically automatically downloaded.

Sky charges channels approximately £70,000 a year for its EPG Freesat, halves this to £35,000 and uses such proceeds for maintenance. Any surplus goes into new feature research and development. Despite what your insistent hard-sell retailer might say, if you have a Sky receiver tuned to Astra 28° E, you only need to purchase a receiver and swap it with the existing one. There is no legal or technical impediment of any kind. Also if you purchase the Humax HD receiver, you are able to tune in all the free-to-air channels on that satellite and then switch between Freesat and non-Freesat. This is a hidden facility. You need to go to 'manual set-up' and then 'manual tune' in Settings. Once you have stored these, STB mode appears in Settings and this will allow you to switch between the two. If terrestrial digital Freeview ever gets HD, a space-making reshuffle will inevitably diminish the quality of the existing standard definition channels. Satellite is definitely the way to go for future change and quality. For the libertarian anarchist, a free-to-air non-profit operation is surely the obvious choice.

I often read pompous self-righteous letters in the local rag, from small-minded suburban bourgeois town councillors usually objecting to 'ugly' satellite dishes erected by their neighbours. When contrasting the various oval and circular satellite dishes with those large ungainly television and radio aerials — I used to imagine those local unworthies must have inherited a strange perversity of vision. Probably some kind of 'funny

'funny-eye' gene. It turned out that many of those pathetic elitist snobs equated dishes with football and football was unquestionably the sport of lower-life forms.

Even more surprising and disturbing is that some self-styled anarchists (probably SWP clones) have referred to television as 'the new opium of the people'. I'll certainly put some of that in my pipe and smoke it. Not that I can ever be seriously considered objective on the good taste and discernment level. I'm the guy who watched every episode of the badly made Australian cult series Cell-Block-H.

Raise your oriental poppies to Freesat and any libertarian technology yet to be thought up.

Dave Cunliffe

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.

BOOKCHIN - THE SECTARIAN

MURRAY Bookchin was an American anarchist who died in 2006. He had made a huge contribution to anarchist thought over the 50 years or so before he died, deepening it in many ways and adding a stock of new ideas. More recently he seemed to have stopped calling himself an anarchist, preferring the term Social Ecologist. He began his activist life as a labour militant in the 30s and gravitated towards Marxism. Later he became an anarchist and, in the late 50s one of the first to write about the looming ecological crisis of contemporary society. He retained, however, a lot of Marxist baggage - including I believe a tendency towards sectarian polemics. He seems to have taken against other anarchists in much the same spirit that Lenin took against infantile leftists'. Lenin, who had never read Tolkien and probably wouldn't have been impressed if he had, attacked other Marxist factions because he believed that one had to acquire state-power if one wanted to change the world. 'Infantile leftists' simply weren't realistic enough to understand what was involved! Of course, from his own point of view he may have been right, but that doesn't mean that he was a good example for anarchists to follow.

Bookchin's death in 2006 has reminded me that I was once a huge fan of his work. I admired the eloquence and passion of his writing in books such as *Post-Scarcity Anarchism* and, later, *The Ecology of Freedom*, just as I admired his philosophical literacy, especially concerning Hegel. More recently, however, I have begun to have a problem with some of his work. The source of my problem is that he seems very unwilling to entertain anarchist viewpoints which, on the surface, differ radically from his own. It is in essays like *Social Anarchism* and *Lifestyle Anarchism* that this tendency is most evident. I do not believe that this is due to any influence from Hegel, whose dialectical method implicitly acknowledges the need to reconcile opposing positions, but rather a consequence of his earlier Marxist background. A true Hegelian would approach the work of John Zerzan, Hakim Bey (aka Peter Lamborn Wilson), the Situationists and other "Neo-

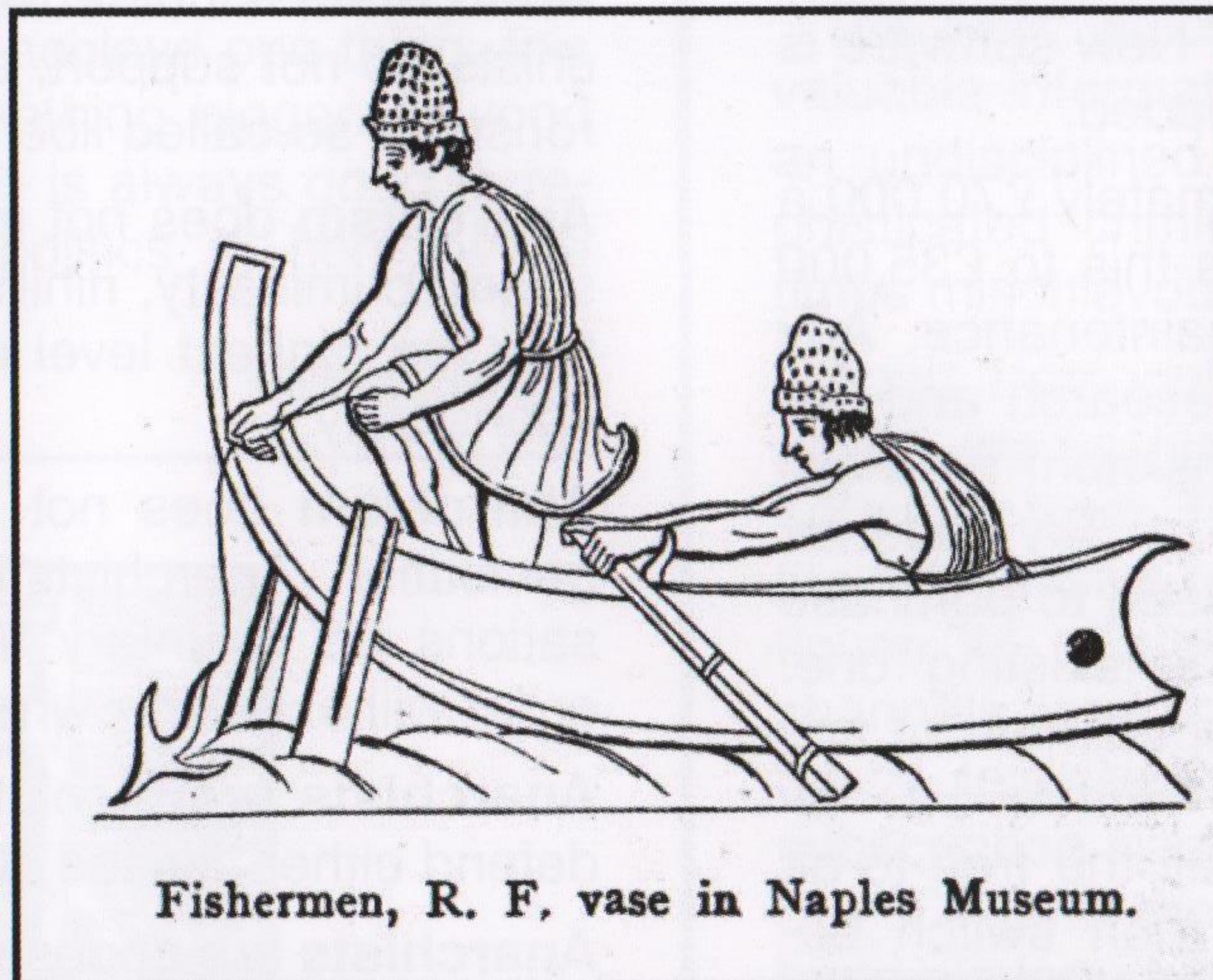
Heideggerian Romantics" in a critical but not necessarily polemical way. He or she would look for what is valid or insightful in their thinking in order to integrate it into their own, rejecting perhaps what they cannot make use of. This is not what Bookchin does. He rejects these thinkers out of hand, and doesn't even stop to consider that they might have something important to say. Unlike Marxism, Anarchism may not be riven with this kind of sectarianism, but it is not entirely free of it either. And Bookchin, with his previous Marxist background and habits, is, in my opinion, one of its worst offenders.

The social anarchism to which Bookchin subscribes is in the tradition of the Rational Enlightenment. Indeed, Bookchin himself bangs on incessantly about the Rational Enlightenment. Life-

style anarchism, on the other hand, embodies a Romantic reaction to the ideals of the Rational Enlightenment which Bookchin lays claim to. Romanticism, as a historical cultural phenomenon, recognised the place of the irrational in human behaviour and, rightly in my opinion, believed that we could not reduce everything to rational terms. To say that we can is to argue that language - and the rational thought which it structures - is in every way

adequate to reality, when it is rather the case that there are many aspects of reality which fall through the holes in the net language and reason try to throw over it.

Bookchin's loyalty to the principles of the Rational Enlightenment motivates his attack on lifestyle anarchists like Zerzan or Bey. My own acquaintance with Zerzan's *Anarcho-Primitivist* ideas goes back to my reading of *5th Estate* over 20 years ago. I found his ideas difficult to accept at face value, but nonetheless they made me think. I don't believe we can return to a hunter-gatherer way of life any more than Bookchin does; nor do I believe that we can live without language - or the alienating consequences of our symbolic view of the world, which language imposes - and return to the condition of *Homo Habilis*. I reject Zerzan's conclusions, therefore, without necessarily rejecting the premises he bases them on. Bey also accepts Zerzan's premises without accepting his conclusions. As a conse-



Fishermen, R. F. vase in Naples Museum.

quence, what Bey believes in is not a Return to the Primitive but the Return of the Primitive - perhaps influenced by Freud's notion of the Return of the Repressed. And that, I think, is a far more interesting idea. The Return of the Primitive is to me what anarchism should be about, not a Return to the Primitive. After all, the world is now a very different place from the world our hunter-gatherer ancestors inhabited. Without a huge 'die-back' of perhaps 99.9% of the world's population, there would simply not be enough habitats for us to survive in using hunter-gatherer methods. Not only that, but even given such a die-back, it would probably be next to impossible for the survivors to re-acquire the long-forgotten skills and aptitudes possessed by aboriginal peoples. But, if a return to the primitive is impossible, does it follow that Bey's intriguing notion of The Return of the Primitive is also impossible?

Using the Freudian idea of The Return of the Repressed as our template, it is in fact not only possible, but very actual. It already exists, in other words, and on a day to day basis. Take the phenomenon of football hooliganism as an example. As I have argued elsewhere, it constitutes in some ways a return of 'primitive' forms of non-alienated warfare. (Alienated warfare would be the kind of warfare states engage in, which requires hierarchical chains of command, and an ethos of giving and taking orders). What's interesting about football hooliganism is that it constitutes an opportunity for the Return of the Primitive in entirely unconscious ways. It is, of course, distorted by the culture and society in which it is embedded, and therefore cannot be a pure expression of the Return of the Primitive. What can? Freud said something similar about the Return of the Repressed, in that it too only took forms which were acceptable to the society in which it emerged. Bey's controversial concepts of "ontological anarchy" and Temporary Autonomous Zones (PAZ) are, as I understand them, different ways of talking about the Return of the Primitive, in the sense I mean here. They are ways, if not of overcoming the alienation implicit in civilised life, then of compensating for it on an unconscious level. It happens all the time, which is why Bey calls his form of anarchy ontological to distinguish it from ethical anarchism or political anarchism, which are conscious rather than unconscious in nature.

For Bey, the world is fundamentally anarchic already. The first sentence T.A.Z. reads "Chaos never died." Two paragraphs later, "Everything in Nature is perfectly real, including consciousness. There is nothing to worry about. Not only have the chains of law been broken, they have never existed; demons never guarded the stars. The

Empire never got started. Eros never grew a beard." And in the next paragraph: "No listen, what happened was this; they lied to you, sold you ideas of good and evil, gave you distrust of your body and shame for your prophet hood of chaos, invented words of disgust for your molecular love, mesmerised you with inattention, bored you with civilisation and all its usurious emotions." Anarchism won't change the fact of chaos, although it stands a better chance of adapting us to it than a statism whose purpose is to impose order on it from above. Many anarchists, Bookchin included, don't seem to like this notion of anarchy as primordial chaos. What they want is a domesticated 'rational' form of "anarchy", as if anarchy should somehow come with a government health warning. The truth, however, is that we are all basically 'primitive' rather than 'civilised'. Ontological Anarchy, Temporary Autonomous Zones and the 'Primitive' are ultimately different terms for the same complex phenomenon namely the 'Primitive' in each of us confronting the 'civilised', the anarchical confronting the hierarchically ordered. Bey's Return of the Primitive is the Return of Anarchy - without a government health warning, of course. I don't know whether I have fully grasped Hakim Bey's proper meaning, but this is the meaning I take from his work.

The problem with Bookchin is that his attachment to the ideals of the Rational Enlightenment was so complete that he could not entertain other ideas which appeared to be incompatible with them. Therefore he dismissed them all as "romantic". He was incapable of standing back from his own entrenched point of view, in other words, and an anarchist who cannot do that inevitably comes to believe that it is inviolable and that's only one step removed from wanting to impose it on others. Nobody was asking him to abandon his own ideas, only to seriously consider somebody else's. That he couldn't do so proves that he was, to my mind, a sectarian, and sectarianism is the last thing anarchism needs.

Richard Livermore

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An Anarchist Way of Death

NO, not at the barricades, or leading a fearless cohort into the enemy ranks. This article is more mundane than that – in fact it is about as mundane as you can get. What do you want to happen to your body when you die? Perhaps you don't care? Many of us in the omnipotence of whatever age we happen to be will say this, until the grim reaper approaches you, your family, or a good friend.

Why should this question be of interest to anarchists? For one thing, other than the intimate details of sexual behaviour, death, particularly your own, is the most taboo subject of all. I believe anarchists should be free from this inhibition. Apart from that, there are some facts that may be of interest. Surprising as it may seem, when you are dead is the only time in your existence you actually own your body! Not that the wishes of the deceased concerning their body are always observed, there is not much they can do about it anyway! In many ways and under a wide range of circumstances, the State has first call while you are alive. So in a perverse way what you do with your body can matter – it may be never be too late to cock a metaphorical snoot to the State.

Two old anarchist friends left their bodies to medical research, with the provision that any bits which could be re-used should be. All very noble in intention, no doubt. But the truth is that the various medical industries get more than enough bits and pieces to play with one way or another. And they could be yours; if you die without having seen a doctor in the previous three weeks a post mortem is a legal requirement to establish how you died. So you may not be clear of the state's interest until they have had one last look at you. To make sure you are not smuggling subversive material wherever you are going?

My interest in all this started some time ago at one of John Papworth's Academic Inn Suppers. Nick Albery announced that he was calling a meeting to discuss Natural Death. I couldn't resist. I shot my hand up and asked, 'Will there be practical workshops?' Apparently not. As he and his partner had reacted against the medicalisation of birth, a natural function not an illness, it was logical to take back the end of life, a natural function not necessarily an illness, as far as possible. That sort of sentiment appealed to me, although I did nothing about it at the time.

Nick is no longer with us but his idea left behind the Natural Death Centre. This is an advisory and educational charity. Its main activity is the publication of the Natural Death Handbook, a weighty

volume covering every aspect of the subject. The principle outcome is a range of natural cemeteries. There are now over 140 of these in Britain, and the movement has spread to mainland Europe and America. In Britain these range from the boring local authority plain flat field where they will stick a tree on the serried ranks, to burial in an established beautiful wood. It is surprising how many people express the wish to have a tree 'stuck on top' when they are buried.

The anarchist approach that we have followed is the natural woodland one. My partner knew this was what I wanted after talking with her about Nick's idea. So when the NHS did their very best to kill me with MRSA, she had to act quickly – she bought an eight acre wood! Fortunately, the NHS failed, although they did a lot of damage. So what to do with the wood? When Bella's father expressed the desire to be buried there, we decided to open it up as a natural cemetery. This gives grieving families and friends the chance to have whatever ceremony or celebration they would like to mark the passing. Marching jazz band? Why not? Quiet contemplation? Sure. Anything at all, so long as it doesn't harm the trees. Even holy water won't do that.

And we have an IT whiz. He has developed a programme that enables us to divide the wood into 2½ metre squares. This matches the Ordnance Survey grid, and of course, it is linked to our computer database. Thus we can plot whatever is happening in every part of the wood. Legally, we have to mark where people are buried; we use small pieces of local stone. Perhaps more surprising, we can mark which plots people have chosen as their future resting places. Naturally, we've gone along with this. We have a 'Pay Now, Die Later' scheme that is proving popular. It allows pets to be buried in an agreed glade. And one thing we always emphasise with this sort of burial – 'it's never too late to help the environment'.

Of course it's not only about the freedom of natural burials. It's about restoring a wood, once owned by the Forestry Commission, to one containing only native species. And by turning it into a cemetery, we are protecting those trees. When we got the wood, much of it was a dark, silent tree factory. Now we have opened areas up, bluebells are returning to the forest floor and small birds flit amongst the branches. Quite often we hear buzzards cry as they wheel over head.

None of this may be of any interest to you. But before you dismiss it as just another nutty green idea, I suggest you read the history of the discov-

ery of Easter Island. A thriving self-sufficient society existed there, until they cut down all their trees to help with shifting and erecting their giant statues. Many scientists and ecologists see Easter Island as a microcosm of the whole world. Trees are essential if we are going to survive. For more information see www.eternalforest.org or e-eft@eternalforest.org

Colin Johnson



Abolish Restaurants: a worker's critique of the food service industry

www.prole.info pamphlet

reprinted by Active Distribution

*The function of the surgeon is to humbly assist
other comrades.*

Mao Tse Tung

Hmm. Myself I rather like restaurants. They are one of life's small pleasures. I've had some good times sharing food and wine with a friend or two. At a much younger age restaurants proved to be a comfortable place to commence the first awkward steps in dating. Food aside, much of the pleasure of restaurants came from the people around me: those at the table, the "front of house" staff and what is sometimes snootily called the "ambience" of the place itself. Most decent and thoughtful Anarchists are sensitive to the people around them. And just as we would pick-up on disingenuous dining companions so we would to those who wait on our table. Treat people like rat-shit and you get back what you deserve.

So I approached this pamphlet with some caution. It is well presented in a competent cartoon form with a welcome eye for design. But once I start to examine the text I am back to that tired Marxist jargon of an assumed consciousness and rigid either/or thinking. The pamphlet sings with sweeping generalisations that even the most hardened of class warrior would treat with scepticism. We are told that restaurant owners: "want one thing - to make money". "Those that work in restaurants...are forced to...[they] have no other way to make a living." The relationship between the restaurant manager and his staff is one where "employees have to be constantly coerced, monitored, and played off against each other." "For the most part, restaurant workers hate [their] customers" and "The only people really proud to be restaurant workers are a handful of chefs who work in very expensive restaurants and are the boss's pets."

Well, OK. I dare say you will find restaurants like this in tourist areas. The turnover of customers matches the turnover of staff. And no one really complains because there are always fresh customers and new people who will take on the jobs. Such restaurants are easy to spot and you can always get up and leave or, horrors of horrors, actually complain. As the pamphlet states you will find the same set up in many other places of work. What it doesn't say is that you will also find many places where conditions like this do not apply.

Years ago, when travelling through France, I believed it would be possible to pick up occasional work as a waiter. After all, I had been brought up on English cuisine where any fool can clear up empty plates. What a shock it was. It didn't take long to realise that waiting-on in France is a highly respected profession requiring a lengthy apprenticeship. The experience showed me the art and commitment it takes to provide good service to customers. From the creation of the food to the way a knowledgeable waiter is happy to spend time discussing menus it all becomes part of a large picture. This is food as an art form where workers are more artist than resentful slaves.

I have come to admire workers who see themselves as artisans. Recently I worked in a print shop staffed with printers approaching the official ages of retirement. They were the sort of men who could spot a 3/8th Whitworth nut and bolt from across the shop-floor. The only kind of work that was acceptable to them was work of the highest quality. I've seen them take back work that was otherwise acceptable to the customer and re-set it to a required standard.

And the pamphlet's solution to restaurants?

Abolish them. Once capitalism goes, we are told, then restaurants will be abolished. Scarecrows dance before my eyes whenever I encounter such cut-and-paste strategies. They conjure up dreadful images. Cans of Galloway Spratts in tins of brine for sale in the worker's canteen. Soviet style who-gives-a shit cafeterias. Rip-off motorway service-stations. Food slapped down on plates by surly waitresses with smudged lipstick.

My own belief is that Anarchism is about a life of service to others. The political virtues we all strive towards – the co-operation of mutual aid; the generosity and altruism of free association – are all concerned with the welfare of others. People want meeting places that are a joy to enter. And the sharing of food has been long recognised as a powerful communal point of contact.

Charles Fourier had it right. People work best in short bursts of intensity over two or three days. They go to work in processions singing the old songs, with bands playing and banners flying. Once the work is done then a celebratory communal feast is enjoyed by all. This is work produced by people who are proud to be workers and seek reward in the standard of service they provide to other comrades.

The pamphlet was successful in provoking discussion. Out of this arose the idea that things become meaningless if we keep them on an abstract level. What was needed is to put in a practical approach to the critique. Thus we approached our fellow comrades at Bradford's 1in12 Club. The club is one the more exciting places in this deprived city and they welcomed the idea of jointly hosting a Gourmet Vegan Lunch at the club.

So we began. It didn't take long to realise the hard work involved in a restaurant experience. We spent £45 on food sourced at the local market. Preparation of the food took 10 hours. But it was enjoyable labour carried out with a sense of cheery chaos.

On the day, we were in early to help prepare the tables. The room was resplendent with white table covers, sparkling glasses and red and black serviettes. And very soon we were off. Punters who wandered in were offered a seat and a menu. The place filled up slowly which enabled

the waiters to take time in judging when to remove plates and serve the next course. Unfortunately, the wine waiter failed to materialise (he has a drinking problem). No matter. Each glass was swiftly refreshed.

In all we anticipated 30 covers but in the end we had 18 customers. This was mainly due to poor advertising with people thinking it was a 1in12 prank. But the feedback was genuinely excellent and we are much encouraged to repeat the performance.

What did we learn? Firstly, there's lots of skill involved. Judging amounts of food and basic costing can only come from experience. The atmosphere in the kitchen between chef/waiter/washer-upper was friendly and supportive. Assessing when to serve and when to remove empty plates is indeed a skill in itself. The friendliness ratio of customer to waiter increases in direct proportion to the times a glass is refilled. And like good Anarchists we joined in with punters to eat and drink at the end of the meal.

What was really good was to see how people start to communicate with each other over good food and wine. There was certainly a more accommodating ambiance to be had here than some of dry political meetings we attend. Discounting labour costs (nil: we did it for service and because we believed in it) we were only £10 short of breaking even. Next time, guaranteed from word-of-mouth, we'll have many more customers, we'll break even, and donate this thing we call profit. Abolish restaurants? My Arse. They just need re-inventing.

Peter Good

Anchorage anarchy

Is a semi-annual publication of BAD Press,
an anti-government anarchist project
and is edited by Joe Peacott
Subscriptions are available for
\$1 per issue
You can reach BAD Press at
PO Box 230332
Anchorage, AK 99523-0332
USA
bbrigade@world.std.com

Making Money for Dummies

THIS September saw the biggest upheaval in the banking world since the great depression. Now those who've got it hang on to it. As the banking system grinds to a near halt, the difference in commodity prices now and then shows how they use money to make money at our expense. They don't produce anything, they just buy and sell – buy as cheap as they can, and sell as dear as they can. That's what they call making a living.

Of course it works the other way around. Sell something you've got when the price is going down, thus helping the price go down further. Then you buy back what you had in the first place, so you've got what you had in the first place plus a heap of money from selling dear and buying back cheap.

What the 'regulatory authorities' are objecting to now is a slightly different version of this game. In this version you co-operate with a friend who has a lot of something. You 'borrow' a lot from him, and sell them. This causes the price to fall. You then buy them back, and return them to you friend – with a cut of the proceeds of course.

This is fine as long as the market 'recovers'. It usually does so as suckers try to jump on the gravy train. What happened recently was that too many spivs drove the market down too far – there just weren't enough suckers to put in (lose) enough money for the market to recover. This is what 'losing confidence' in the market really means – people are not confident enough to lose their money in the system. The big traders are usually more philosophical about the process. They may lose (other peoples' money) one day. But it will be their turn to win (for themselves) another. But things went too far for them. This is usually called 'turmoil'.

If most people are happy with oil at \$90 per barrel, why were we paying \$140 a few weeks back? It's just a good example of the way the market would like to work with any commodity. There are two base prices; that of oil, and that of the \$. If the base price of oil is \$90, those who operate the market are (were) making \$50 per barrel for every barrel they bought and sold in frenetic paper transaction. They don't want to see the oil, just the dollars, thank you.

I suppose that operating the markets in the same way, but for money instead of oil, was a greedy step too far. Too far this time because everyone understands figures – well, nearly everyone does. And too many spivs got on the gravy train, and crashed it. Hey! – that's not the idea at all! The idea is that a select sort of person, someone in the right 'position', gets on board and rides until he retires, dropping off goodies when he has to.

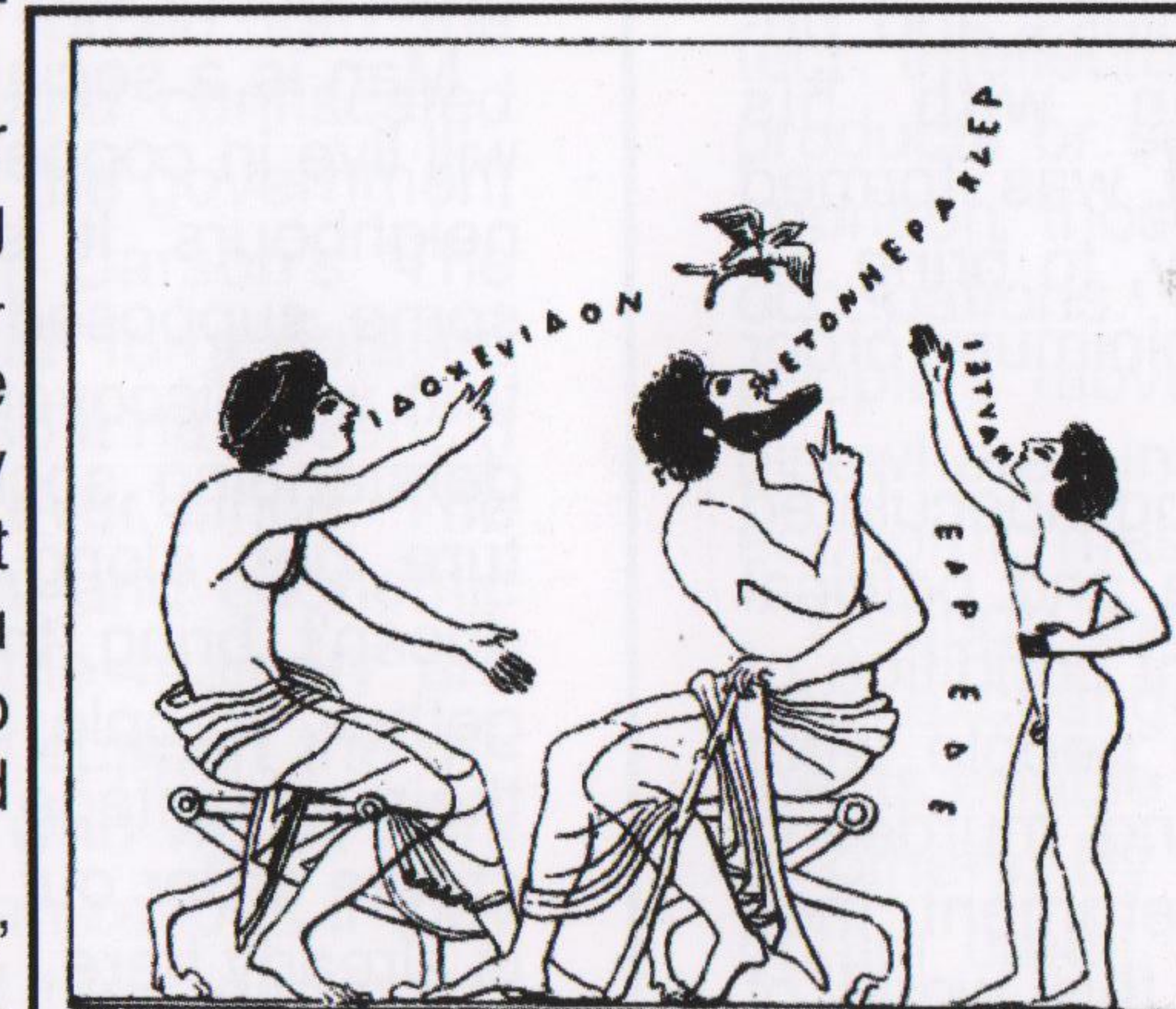
But we are supposed to live in a free market economy, aren't we? Anybody, or everybody, should be able to jump on the train, shouldn't they? Isn't that the American Dream? (Only when they lose money? No, no, I'm sure that's not right. Is it?) And if the bank carriage of the train can't stand it, and its wheels fall off, too bad. That's a free market for you.

And that is the biggest casualty of recent time. The illusion of a free market may have

been fatally injured in saving the banks from the crash. The bankers and a lot of the market operators lost a lot of money, and an institutional bank did crash in the dark murky tunnel that it inhabited. But all was not lost. Here comes the cavalry! The national banks, those bodies that hold the wealth of nations, opened up their coffers and poured out our money to save these very important people and institutions.

Two big questions emerge. The first is this: is America worth it? We are all used to another illusion, that America is incredibly rich. But it's not. In reality America is the biggest debtor nation on Earth. In fact China has more cash dollars than the US – if the history of recent events ever comes to light, it will be very interesting to see what part she played. The illusion that America is rich has to be maintained because the US owes so much money to so many. America took the old joke seriously and made it work for them. You know the one, 'If you owe the bank a thousand, you're in trouble. If you owe them a million, they are in trouble.' If the dollar went to its real value we would all be in trouble!

The second question concerns the ethics of the whole banking system. There can be no doubt that a lot of ordinary people have lost large amounts of money during the recent turmoil. Many have lost their houses. But this is not the



10. The first swallow of spring. R. F. Vase from Vulci.

priority of our financial institutions. They are concerned that other banking institutions don't crash – never mind the value of individual savings or pensions, they are all incidental. Why? Why are institutions more important?

Colin Johnson

OBJECTIONS TO ANARCHISM

OBJECTION Number 1: In a state of nature man lived in ruthless and uncontrolled competition with his neighbours. Government was formed to combat this destructive tendency, to bring order out of chaos, to provide the minimum order required for social stability.

ANSWER: Philosophers have long speculated on the origins of human social life and political life. Some have pictured the ancient condition of man as one of total chaos where people went about plundering everything and murdering everyone they could find. Only government, they say, brought order and peace to this world of conflict. Others have argued with some force that people joined together basically for economic reasons - it simply was the only practical way to survive. They have further argued that this need for physical survival ultimately brought government into being since people needed an organization to settle their personal disputes and to protect them from rapacious outsiders. Both theories are based on benevolent views of government and they form the basis for many people's idea of what government is today, or at least what they think government should be today.

Neither theory, however, offers an historically realistic appraisal of the origin and nature of government. A third and much more promising theory was advanced by Franz Oppenheimer, who argued that the state is formed from conquest.

It is, however, difficult to determine how men actually lived in "a state of nature" because we have few records of how social life was then organized. Since we can know little of the primeval beginnings of the human race, it is best that we look at man as we see him every day around us.

It takes little discernment to realize that all modern governments are the result not of benevolent policing, as many political scientists would like us to believe, but of conquest, of intrigue and power struggles, and of a desire to gain advantage over others through the creation of the state.

Modern governments were not formed by a social contract, not even one remotely resembling Rousseau's ideal. Rather, some of them are the

result of revolutions which merely exchanged one set of rulers for another, while others are the children of ancient governments that have passed down the lordship they gained centuries ago through conquest from one generation of political class to another.

Man could not possibly live as a social animal if he lived in a world of universal antagonism. Social life is made possible by our knowledge that most people most of the time are not going to hurt each other or steal from each other. Without that assurance all social life would come to a standstill and there would be no agency or organization of any kind that could bring peace and order out of such a situation.

Man is a social animal and for the most part he will live in cooperative, peaceful relations with his neighbours. It is in this fact of nature, and not some supposed magical power of government, that we discover the essential ingredient for understanding social stability. People by their nature get along with each other. Government doesn't bring them together or keep them together. People live social lives because it is to their advantage to do so. Government doesn't create order out of chaos. The order of social life is already here.

Michael Coughlin

OBITUARY

IT is with great sadness that I heard of the death of Harry Sculthorpe who died in May aged 85 after a short illness. Harry was a great supporter of Anarchism in Britain especially the causes of peace, rambling, walkers access rights, and the Freedom Press, where he was a board member on Friends of Freedom Press Ltd. He was a contributor of articles to *Freedom* and editor on a number of editions of *The Raven*. Harry was also a generous supporter of Total Liberty distributing copies of TL amongst his circles in Yorkshire. Harry was also a good supporter of several projects of East Midlands Anarchists in the early years of this century. These included the Anarchist gatherings which myself and Mike Hamilton organised at Height Gate, near Hebden Bridge, and the rambling outings of Yorkshire Red Rambles, which began when Jean Pollard started a Yorkshire group of the pre-existing Derbyshire Red Rambles. Harry was also an active participant in the Northern Anarchist Network and a supporter and contributor to Northern Voices. Harry's funeral was attended by a great number including his wife Gwen Goddard, relatives, friends and comrades and was a celebration of his life. He will be missed.

Jonathan Simcock

Notes on State Capitalism

There is a myth shared by right and left alike that capitalism somehow evolved on its own through market forces, simply because it was the most efficient way of doing business. On the contrary, the state was a key player in the development of capitalism from the beginning. When the industrial revolution began, farmers did not flock to the factories and cities because they believed that the new work on offer was better than what they had done previously. Instead they had to be forced into the "satanic mills" by having their land confiscated and their movement restricted by the government and its armed agents. (See Kevin Carson's "The Iron Fist Behind the Invisible Hand" for a detailed discussion of this process). And so it has been, in ways both subtle and obvious, ever since. The state arranges the rules of social and economic interaction in such a way that the majority are forced, in one way or another, to support the minority with their labour. After all, who would work for authoritarian bosses and organizations if they had access to cheap credit and the freedom to associate with others of their choice to form mutually beneficial and egalitarian productive ventures?

The recent troubles in the financial and banking industry have demonstrated once again that there ain't no such thing as a free market when there is a government involved in the economy. Despite the claims of both the defenders and opponents of actually existing capitalism, the state and business are anything but opponents or competitors, but instead are partners in the fleecing of working people. It is governments that provide the conditions in which the thieves who run corporations can extort vast amounts of wealth from those who actually produce goods and services, and then act as insurers of last resort if these same predators end up on the wrong end of a gamble. The government has bailed out business owners and executives (remember Chrysler, or the Savings & Loan associations?) many times in the past and will do so in the future.

And the politicians finance these services to business not with fees charged to those they serve, but by robbing the producers a second time through taxation. The state assures that corporate profit is privatized, while risks are socialized. Corporate capitalism could not exist without state protection and any belief that capitalism can be reformed or improved by further state intervention in the economy is sadly misplaced.

Banking on the State

The current world economy is a creature of government from top to bottom. Governments create the money used in financial transactions and ban all competing currencies within their jurisdictions. They make the laws and regulations which allow people to form businesses from banks to restaurants to workshops, and dictate how, when, and where they may conduct their trade. They create statutes and rules which protect intellectual "property." They decide what products or services people can sell or buy and imprison those who dare to work in prohibited occupations. They establish borders and control people's movements so they cannot seek work elsewhere unless that suits the needs of their economic masters.

Through their interventions in what should be free exchanges between free people, governments enable a select few to profit from the work of others. By restricting people's ability to freely obtain credit, design their work as they see fit, and offer whatever products and services they like to others who seek them, the state ensures that most people end up working for others who extract part of the wealth created by their employees simply because most people have no real alternative. But besides supplying private industry with a work force, the state also directly funds private enterprises that it favours. Some people are crying about the billions of dollars (for which taxpayers will ultimately be responsible) about to be borrowed by the US government from other parasitical investors to bail out the banks, but overlook the fact that the congress just awarded \$600,000,000,000 to the military, most of which will end up in the pockets of private industrialists and contractors, while providing \$25,000,000,000 in low interest loans directly to the auto industry. Transferring money from working people to the already-rich is standard operating procedure for politicians.

Even those who oppose the way in which the world economy functions, however, generally fail to see that the state is at the root of the problem. What passes for the labour movement has no objection when state interventions appear to favour employees and the unions pressure governments to pass laws, rules, and regulations that supposedly make the battlefield between labour and capital somewhat more level. Anti-capitalists believe that government is not necessarily the enemy, but can be a tool to remedy the economic inequity found everywhere around the globe.

They believe that if they vote for the right politicians, they will have an institution that will rein in unrestrained, unregulated capitalism and protect the interests of working people from the predations of the rich. But no one seems to challenge the state's right to be involved in the economy in the first place.

The Current Meltdown

This is clear from the current crisis in banking and finance around the world. The united states government is planning to spend billions, perhaps trillions, of dollars to prop up inefficient, corrupt, wasteful, and usurious companies with money they have extorted from precisely the same sort of people whom these banks and insurers preyed on. The governmental supporters of capitalism are not willing to let those who overspent and gambled unwisely to live with the consequences of their actions. They are not going to allow these financiers to be held personally accountable for their bad judgment and worse actions. No, the politicians and bureaucrats believe the bankers and insurers are entitled to their ill-gotten gains, and, even though they were not prudent enough to run their businesses reasonably and sustainably, the government is willing to guarantee them their booty. Instead of letting these usurious institutions self-destruct, the government is investing in them to allow them to continue playing their shell game with fake money to separate fools from their money.

One might argue that this is in conflict with the rough and tumble free market where people take real risks and either profit or lose as a result of their actions. True, but such a market has never really existed. It is simply a useful story to mask the true relationship between business and government. The bankers were playing by rules established by the state: governments charter these banks, establish legal tender, audit bank finances, decide what transactions lenders and borrowers may and may not engage in, and allow them to avoid any personal responsibility or liability by incorporating. These rules allow them to fleece their customers while preventing any substantive competition from mutual aid organizations or alternative currencies. This is hardly an unregulated market.

There are many critics of the government's plan, but they disagree only with specifics, not with the principle. They want some of the money that executives have pocketed taken back to finance the state buyouts. They want less tax money spent on resuscitating the moribund financial corporations. Some would like to see the current banks dissolve, but do not want to see the end of state-supported corporate banking. But the bottom line for most is that they would like to see the government even more intimately in-

involved in the business of banking, mortgages, and insurance. The critics believe that the fictional "deregulation" of banking and finance is what caused the problem, and the solution is more regulation.

Where is the support for a truly innovative and independent alternative to the state/capital nexus? Nowhere to be found, apparently. Rich and the poor alike look to the state for salvation and any libertarian approaches are generally ignored or sneered at. But the only hope of real reform lies with a rejection of government action. Whatever the intentions of the bankers, without the state to structure the economy and society in such a way that they are the only game in town, they would not be able to do what they have done, and hope to continue doing to the rest of us.

Now and Later

It is clear that there will be no non-statist solution to the crisis that is occurring right now, since the government has made it clear that it will take over or sponsor these failed companies and allow them to continue their depredations. But there are some ways of sorting out this mess that would be fairer than others.

The government appears to have no intention of taking back the money stolen by corporate executives, either those in place at the time of the crash or those who took their golden parachutes within the last year, getting out while the going was good. And the anarchist in me cannot advocate that the government either tax or arrest these people to get it back. Creating a free economy so that they can't do it again would be the libertarian approach.

However, since the state is so benevolent toward these corporate crooks, why not treat those resident homeowners who defaulted on their mortgages (leaving aside at this point whether they should have taken them out in the first place) in a similar fashion. Let them keep their homes and forgive the debt they owe. And then also erase the remainder of the money owed by everyone else with a mortgage on a home they live in. It seems only fair: if executive thieves can walk away with millions, why shouldn't working people get a house out of the deal.

The government claims it can't let the banks and insurers collapse since the money they lend would not be available to the wider economy and a depression would result. But, if they let these companies fold and also cancel all current residential mortgage debt, then billions of dollars otherwise being paid to bankers by homeowners would be redirected into the economy to pay for real stuff instead of executive salaries and stockholder dividends. This money (whether real or not) would not be lost to the economy, but would

actually bring more benefit than that stashed away in millionaires' investment portfolios.

Naturally, this ain't gonna happen. But since I'm dreaming, let me share some ideas about what a real free market might look like. Without a government to supervise, people could devise their own economy. They could come together in mutual banks and issue their own credit, which would be far cheaper than that which a monopoly currency and banking system can demand. They could form mutual health associations, instead of insurance companies, to cover medical costs. They could create individual or cooperative manufacturing, service, or agricultural businesses where the members shared both benefits and risks, instead of limited liability corporations where owners get a disproportionate share of the proceeds but are protected from the negative consequences of their actions. People could trade their products freely, ignoring the unnatural borders that states now maintain. People could move and work wherever they liked, as long as they respected the equal freedom of others.

Some believe that there could be a form of capitalism independent of the state. They argue that such a system, although generating profit, would not involve coercion, and therefore would be consistent with the anarchist principle of individual freedom. While I believe that people should be free to partake of any form of voluntary economic relations that interests them, I suspect that in a real free market, where people could choose individual or mutual cost-based economic options instead of profit-generating capitalist ones, mutualist/individualist models would out-compete capitalist ones. But I fear that I, at least, will not live long enough to have the chance to see who was right.

Joe Peacott

BOOK REVIEW

David C. Korten: *"The Great Turning: from Empire to Earth Community"*. San Francisco, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2006

"The Great Turning" commenced with what I thought was some promise. For 5000 years, the author notes, the world has been dominated by empire, a social system characterized by violence, oppression and authoritarianism. Human-kind must recognize that we are not eternally locked into such a system but should be aware that there are alternative possibilities. There is the possibility of a turning to a world of partnerships rather than domination, of responsibilities of stewardship rather than economic plutocracy, to

restorative justice rather than retributive justice, to a social order of mutual responsibility and accountability rather than coercion. We can move from Empire to the Earth Community. Drawing on Riane Eisler's "The Chalice and the Blade" Korten describes the contrasting dominator or Empire and partnership or Earth Community cultures. He then proceeds to outline five stages of human consciousness which develop from the least mature to the most mature. The least mature stages are referred to as the magical and the imperial consciousness and characterize those most at home in Empire. The mature stages of consciousness are the cultural and spiritual and produce a culture of the Earth Community. These types of consciousness favour partnership, non-violence, cooperation, stewardship; all the good things. He sees hope for our future "in the fact that Empire has created the conditions for the emergence from the bottom up of a new leadership of the whole. The same technological revolution that brings the imperative for change is also facilitating a global cultural and spiritual awakening to the interdependence of life, the unrealized possibilities of our human nature, and the opportunity before us to bring forth a cultural, economic, and political transformation as a conscious collective choice". (73).

In a chapter entitled "When God was a Women" Korten draws on Eisler's "The Chalice and the Blade" with some questionable observations such as her claim that "practically all the material and social technologies fundamental to civilization were developed before the imposition of a dominator society" and during a period of 'the great partnership societies' (93-94). Korten then continues: "There is compelling evidence to suggest that during the crucial pre-Empire days humans lived in relatively egalitarian social units, worshipped the regenerative powers of the Goddess, and depended on women for leadership in many aspects of family and community life"(95). He then turns to Jared Diamond for an explanation of the origins of rulership. That is, when populations become too large, we have the "formal hereditary office of the chief"(103). All of these are speculative and highly controversial accounts. Thus, Korten comes very close to the totally discredited Bachofen type matriarchal story of early society and, while there were goddesses, many of the statues alleged to be goddesses were not goddesses at all. There were also many male divinities of equal and even greater importance. And Korten's description of Diamond's explanation of the origins of rulership totally ignores the role of property in its development. In contrast to those doubtful theories of history which see a progressive evolution, Korten draws a picture of the fall of human kind from a more idyllic past and the