



**THE CUNNINGHAM AMENDMENT**  
**JOURNAL OF THE EAST PENNINE ANARCHISPS.**  
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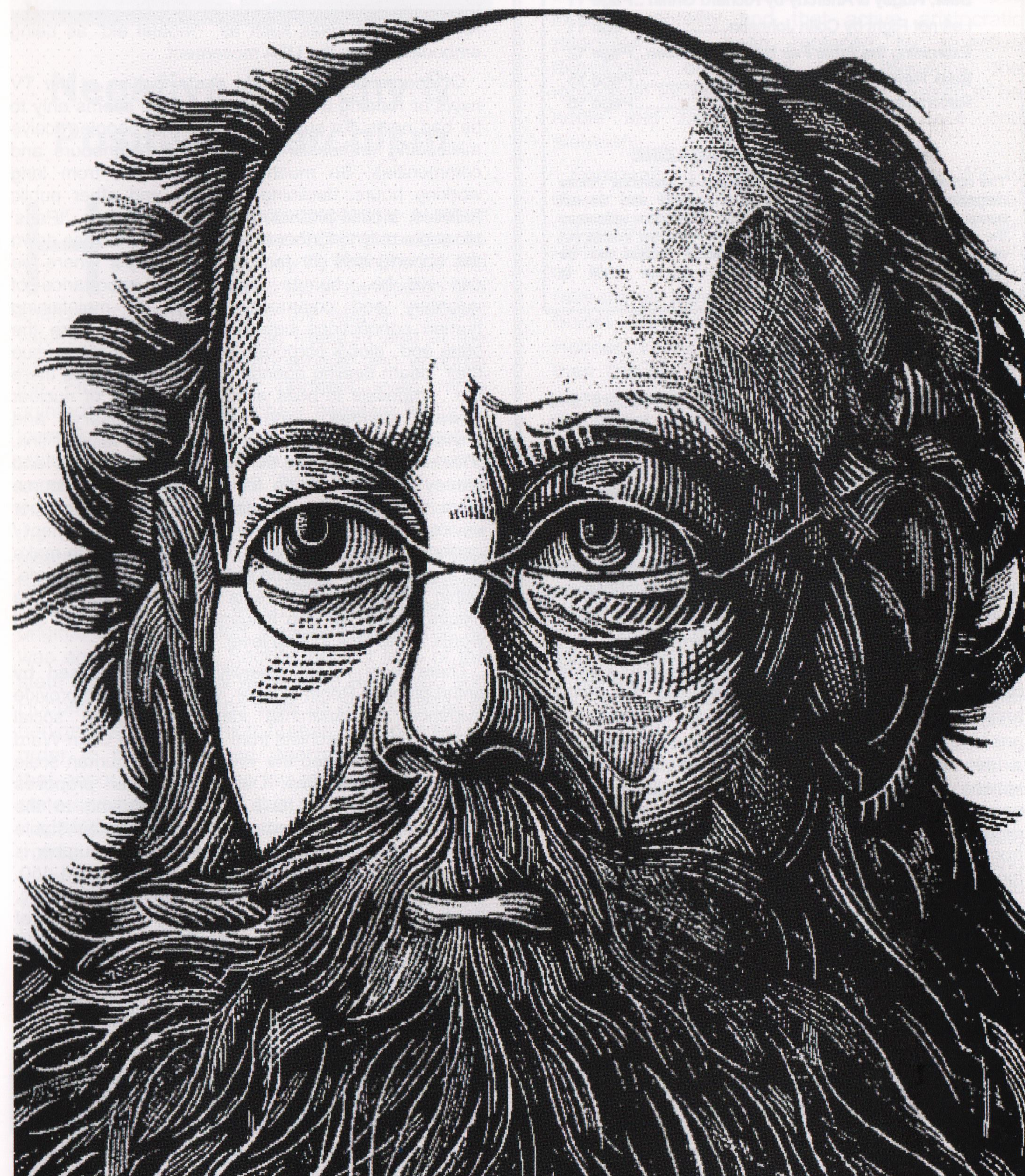
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# ANARCHIST VOICES

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## ANARCHIST VOICES MAGAZINE

The opinions expressed in articles featured in Anarchist Voices magazine are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily represent those of the editor. The editor welcomes the submission of articles for publication in Anarchist Voices but cannot guarantee that they will be published. Articles can be submitted typed on paper, on disc, or via email to [lloegrambyth@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:lloegrambyth@tiscali.co.uk).

## EDITORIAL

**A**pologies are due yet again to readers and subscribers of Anarchist Voices for the fact that there was no Spring / Summer edition. Life keeps on putting the task of working on the magazine at the end of a long list of other priorities.

At present it is tempting for those who take their news from the London papers and globalised mass media, to see nothing good within society. However, at a local level there are still many positive projects maintained and run by hard working and committed activists and volunteers. In the British Isles the network of Transition Town groups are doing much to raise awareness of global warming and the contribution of our overuse of fossil fuels to this process. In the Derbyshire town of Wirksworth there is a thriving group *Wirksworth Community Growers* striving to develop a community allotment, to encourage growing fresh food and to reduce dependence on supermarkets and food brought in from miles away with the ensuing large carbon footprint.

This summer in Belper there was a very successful Food Festival which brought together local food and craft producers with musicians for an event which saw thousands of people celebrating local, organic and healthy food, and good music. There were thousands socialising and dancing in the streets. Ordinary people can still co-operate together to make positive things happen. Another good example of this is the thriving network of the U3A (University of the Third Age) groups. Within Derbyshire every town now

has a U3A branch. There are thousands of people attending and running classes and events organised by the movement. The origin of the U3A perhaps owes a lot to the failings of more formal structures such as local authority Adult Education and the Workers Education Association (WEA). While these two organisations still offer a wide range of courses, they are too expensive for many people and for the tutors they have become too burdened with paperwork and the bureaucracy imposed by central government. As a result many people over 55 and tutors from local education and the WEA have been joining the U3A. Moreover there are links to be made with Anarchist ideas and methods with the U3A movement. The U3A magazine recently carried an article mentioning Kropotkin and ideas such as 'mutual aid' as being embodied within the U3A movement.

Of course once someone starts looking at the TV news or reading the newspapers there seems only to be bad news. To such an extent that people receive misleading impressions about their neighbours and communities. So much of modern life, from long working hours, declining transport and other public facilities, mobile phones, personal computers, 'iPads' etc seem only to further isolate people and close down the opportunities for face to face contact where we can still be human. This is the importance of voluntary and community groups in maintaining human connections between us all. Of course the state and global corporate capitalists will still pursue their death dealing agenda. In the British Isles there are proposals to build a new generation of nuclear power stations, and an unnecessary and environmentally destructive high speed railway link. 'Fracking' seems to be the next technological 'fix' and money making scheme for the city elite. Of course there will rightly be opposition to these and other environmentally and socially destructive government / capitalist projects. However, if Anarchists are to make an impact, it is likely to be at the local and small scale, within local groups, events and movements. The places where we can influence by our actions and words at the face to face level.

There is a recent scientific theory proposed by anthropologist Robin Dunbar, which seems to provide evidence for Anarchist ideas relating to social organisation. Anarchists from Kropotkin to Colin Ward have long advocated the virtues of the human scale of small organisations. 'Dunbar's Number' proposes that human beings have a cognitive limit to the number of people with whom they can maintain stable social relationships. It is suggested that this number is between 100 and 230 but commonly is around 150. Leaving aside the issue of determinism and free will, this theory seems to support the Anarchist criticism of large and mass scale organisations, and to support the Anarchist case for small scale, human scaled social and work organisation.

Jonathan Simcock



## Negative Anarchy & Positive Anarchism

**H**ave you ever wondered why a writer like Louis-Ferdinand Celine could write a book like *Journey To The End Of The Night*, which is so full of damnation and anarchic contempt for all the bogus 'civilised' values which inhibit human freedom and at the same time be a Nazi-sympathiser and endorse the Final Solution? Or perhaps even more pointedly, do not Nietzsche's negative attitudes towards the state and his even more negative attitude towards anarchism, strike you as being somewhat contradictory? Since it would seem that anarchists share his negative evaluation of the state and all that it stands for? Well, not exactly. On a closer reading, it is obvious that Nietzsche was not at all against the aggressive instinct of domination which he believed was the original impulse behind state-building. What he was against was the Social-Contract idea of the state as developed by writers like Rousseau and Hobbes, the idea of the state as an ensemble of benign institutions which human-kind needed in order to become social. Nietzsche understood that conquest and force lay at the origin of the state and he glorified in this as an expression of his "Will to Power". Nietzsche is simply being truthful here in the sense that Machiavelli was truthful in recommending ruthlessness to princes who wanted to hold on to power. Alexander Dumas' *The Man In The Iron Mask* is a Machiavellian parable of a 'bad' king and his 'good' twin with benevolent intentions who temporarily replaces him, but eventually ends up back in the dungeon wearing his iron mask, while his 'bad' ruthless twin takes over the reins of power once again. Because that, in fact, is the only way rulers can properly rule. Machiavelli was probably not confronted with the question of

anarchism, but Nietzsche lived in a time when he could not ignore it. Nietzsche despised anarchism because of the benevolent egalitarian spirit which it had inherited from Christianity. This egalitarian spirit ran counter to the impulses of his Will to Power, which, he believed, lay at the heart of life itself. Christianity, according to Nietzsche, had inverted the natural morality demanded by the uninhibited expression of the Will to Power and replaced it with a plebeian slave-morality which did all it could do to repress it - with dire psychological consequences. He believed that anarchism had inherited this inverted morality and that active aristocratic principles had been replaced by re-active democratic ones and that therefore the motivation for people's actions had ceased to be noble and had become instead base and plebeian.

Personally, I believe that Nietzsche's Will to Power is one of those abstract metaphysical concepts which doesn't correspond to concrete reality. I also believe that his account of the origin of the state is rather simplistic, although refreshingly honest when placed against those of Social Contract theorists like Rousseau and Hobbes. I also find it abstractly more compelling than the Marxist idea which roots the state in class-domination rather than conquest and domination, because that is a theory which puts the cart before the horse in my not so humble opinion. I can't for the life of me see how class-exploitation could have emerged - and more importantly survived and evolved - outside the context of the conquest and subjugation of one group of people by another. Because it seems to me that force had to come first and after it class-exploitation regulated by state-institutions and legal arrangements. Surely, the exploited would simply rise up and rebel unless they were held down by superior force from the outset and compelled to accept it. So, in this area, I find Nietzsche much more convincing than Marx. However, I do find his account rather simplistic, because everyone knows that human societies existed long before states. Nietzsche is not very specific regarding how states first emerged and doesn't really go beyond praising the warlike and aggressive traits which the conquerors would have had to possess to bring the first states into being. That's why he can talk of a 'tribal nobility', which is something of an anachronism, since most pre-state societies had no such nobilities. Nobilities only emerged later with the advent of warrior-aristocracies founded on conquest, subjugation and exploitation.

Precisely because he is so honest about the origin and ongoing nature of state-power, I would



say that, like Celine, he was a champion of negative anarchy as opposed to positive anarchism, which he clearly detested - just as he detested Christianity, socialism and democracy. He wanted to root social relations in naked power - in the Will to Power - and have done with the idea that the state could or should have benevolent functions working equally on behalf of everyone it supposedly protects. Negative anarchy presupposes the kind of stripped down truthfulness which acts on us like a corrosive, stripping us of our comfortable illusions regarding the nature of the state and its primary function of protection. Positive anarchism seeks to go beyond this and actually posit a stateless society as a realisable aim. The first I would say was rooted in our understanding of the ad hoc and negatively anarchic way 'solid' social and political institutions come into being and maintain themselves in being. A kind of negative energy characterises this negative anarchy in a way that it does not characterise positive anarchism.

This kind of anarchy exists at the point when, to quote Yeats, "Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold; / mere anarchy is loosed upon the world". "Mere anarchy" obviously appalled Yeats, although, without it, it is hard to see where the negative energy would have come from to write such a great poem. Negative anarchy represents the moment of destructiveness, which brings the old order down and makes way for the new which grows from its ruins. Such a moment might lead to precisely the opposite of what positive anarchists might think is desirable - some new Leviathan for instance, as happened in France under Robespierre, in Soviet Russia or, perhaps, Iran after the fall of the Shah. All these things are possible - depending on the balance of forces within society as a whole. There are so many hidden variables in that equation, that no-one can really see what the outcome might be. As they say - *Yer pays yer money, yer takes yer chances*.

In the course of history, there have been many attempts to create a new social order based on positive anarchist ideals. In the 20th century, two major attempts were made. The first in the Ukraine during the Russian Revolution, when Nestor Makhno led a group of anarchist partisans against the White Armies of Denicov and later the Red Army under Trotsky. The doomed 1921 uprising in Kronstadt also had an anarchist content, though it was later crushed by Trotsky. Anarchists were also targeted by Lenin's Cheka secret police in 1921, who shot them as 'gangsters'. The last thing Lenin wanted was for people to be reminded of the fact that the Bolsheviks had usurped and hijacked the

revolution. However, anarchists did better in Spain in 1936 after the insurrection of Franco and Barcelona was in a state of revolutionary upheaval as a result of Franco's fascist uprising. Anarcho-Syndicalists held the city for 14 months, during which time the city was under the control of workers' and neighbourhood committees. The experiment in fact worked very well as long as it lasted, but it was destroyed by communist-led Republican forces and, of course, later by Franco. Many of the rural areas of Spain were run by the peasantry under anarchist tutelage. It's all history now, of course. But these experiments did at least reveal the possibilities inherent in positive anarchism where it might grow out of the negative anarchy produced by a revolutionary situation in which suddenly 'everything becomes possible'. Perhaps objective historical circumstances were not propitious, but one can only say that with the advantage of hindsight. Who knows what might happen in a revolution which took root in an advanced capitalist country and spread throughout the rest of the capitalist world? I certainly don't.

Personally, I think Nietzsche was right in his cynicism about the origin and nature of the state, but wrong in his belief that the Will to Power was the basis of life and that this gave the strong natural rights over the weak. It was a metaphysical idea which he couldn't substantiate. Like Hegel before him and Sartre after, Nietzsche rejected Kant's idea of the unknowable 'thing-in-itself' because, like Hegel's Spirit and Sartre's dualistic Being-For-Itself versus Being-In-Itself, his Will to Power was precisely an unknowable 'thing-in-itself' beyond any possibility of being either verified or falsified. Kant was right here and Nietzsche was wrong, I believe. Indeed, the Kantian idea of an unknowable thing-in-itself has a lot in common with Keats's Negative Capability. That is... "when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason" - although, of course, Keats's language is much more succinct than Kant's. Indeed, this is the reason why I will choose negative anarchy over positive anarchism until such a time as the latter proves that it provides some kind of answer to the questions posed by the former. And, until that situation emerges, one can do no more than hope for the best, while somehow expecting the worst.

**Richard Livermore**

Richard Livermore is editor of Chanticleer magazine and the Chanticleer online blog.



## I SING OF ARMS AND THE MAN

**M**y optimistic - not to say utopian - anarcho-primitivism has been hit to the boundary by the belated realisation of the significance of something anyone could have told me, and which I knew but hadn't taken in; hit for four; possibly hit for six.

My thesis has long been that *homo sapiens* is essentially an anarchic social species, which means, before it all got complicated: they were small non-hierarchical egalitarian hunter-gatherer tribes living in affluence in generous environments and - this is the issue - without war.

This Eden ended with the revolution of the late Palaeolithic or Neolithic, which brought in settled farming communities scarred by private property, inequality, coercive hierarchies, scarcity, patriarchy and war - all together called civilisation.

My concern was to show that we could get back to anarchic equality while retaining the knowledge built up over millennia and some of modern technology; not reverting to smelly primitivism.

There were two key factors: power and wealth. It was necessary to destroy coercive power and establish voluntary egalitarian autonomous communities and to expose and eliminate the myth of scarcity. I was sure that scarcity ensures oppression and that only a recognition of the reality of affluence will allow us to be free.

But this year various books and arguments persuaded me that among hunter-gatherers warfare was more prevalent than I had supposed

and that war may well be endemic in the human species. That has made me think, and re-think.

Now I am trying to argue that limited warfare is manageable in egalitarian societies of affluence - effectively, hunter-gatherer - but that it becomes destructive once private property has been established. Then there is something to fight for and keep, including prisoners who could become slaves; and that war requires hierarchy, making of successful warriors, leaders who might well become chiefs.

So could there be war in anarchic, affluent utopia? Why should there be? But hunter-gathering affluence is no longer available as a pure inspiration and perhaps different communities or cultures, with different beliefs, needs, ambitions, are bound to fight. Surely we do not envisage universal agreement on ideology, on process and practice? My utopia is full of variety. How safe is that? And are our genes trustworthy?

I cannot envisage "safeguards" in utopia to prevent aggression and abuse, except those which arise equitably within free, voluntary communities. The anarchist utopia permits no compromise and I am beginning to accept that it really is nowhere and no when.

I do not doubt the viability of anarchism but the roadmap (sorry) is indecipherable; I can see no route through the thickets of power and the swamps of human ignorance and prejudice if, on top of all our other faults, we are evolved to fight.

Anarchism is still a goal worth demanding if only to illustrate some of the principles which are reasonable and necessary now - openness in all decision-making processes; equal access to health care and education; an obligation on any community to ensure the well being of every member before skimming off the cream for a greedy few (until we get rid of them); decentralisation; care of the environment; ending the nonsense of economic growth.

It is quite clear that the nation-state is an enemy of freedom; that representative democracy is a sham; that bureaucracy is inherently corrupt and secretive; that capitalism is inefficient and destructive.

Those are arguments that need making and we can make them, but not as reformers - as anarchists. It is our business to travel, hopefully; paving the way for those who will arrive.

**Dick Frost**







## Book Review

Rob Evans and Paul Lewis, *Undercover*, Faber and Faber, London 2013 ISBN 978-0-571-30217-8

**T**his book is an interesting read, telling the story of a police undercover unit which infiltrated protest groups. There are basically only two real stories in the book. The first is the infiltration of London Greenpeace / the McLibel people, and how a police operative named John Dines became the boyfriend of Helen Steel, one of the McLibel defendants. Some of this was already known about, in the John Vidal *McLibel* book, the stuff about the police and private detectives infiltrating the group. The bit about Helen Steel and Dines was new to me but I expect it was known about well enough by the people within that circle.

The second story is the Mark Stone Kennedy affair which again has been in the news. It mentions how some naïve students started off a plan for an ecological protest invasion of the Radcliffe on Soar power station, but then 'Mark Stone' got involved – a man with a warehouse full of equipment, also providing vans and trucks. Beware of dodgy people with lots of money offering facilities and bearing gifts.

This leads into the question in my mind: how far was the Radcliffe on Soar power station occupation attempt an entrapment operation from beginning to end? One of the big problems which naïve student protests groups have is that they don't have the history, they don't seem to know about previous cases of this sort, and so they go on making those mistakes, going round and round the same loop of entrapment.

The book gives a sketchy back-history of this SDS police infiltration group from the late 1960s onwards, but it ignores the previous history of infiltration by the Special Branch and other groups. One of the really big omissions is the Angry Brigade. It says that the SDS group began in 1968, and yet there is no mention of the AB in there, operating at around that time, and which I would have expected. We could go on from there and ask about what the SDS group did to the Unions in the 1970s, which must have been a big part of its remit then, or what about the IS / SWP, ANL in the 70s? Then there was CND and the Greenham Common peace camp in the 1980s.

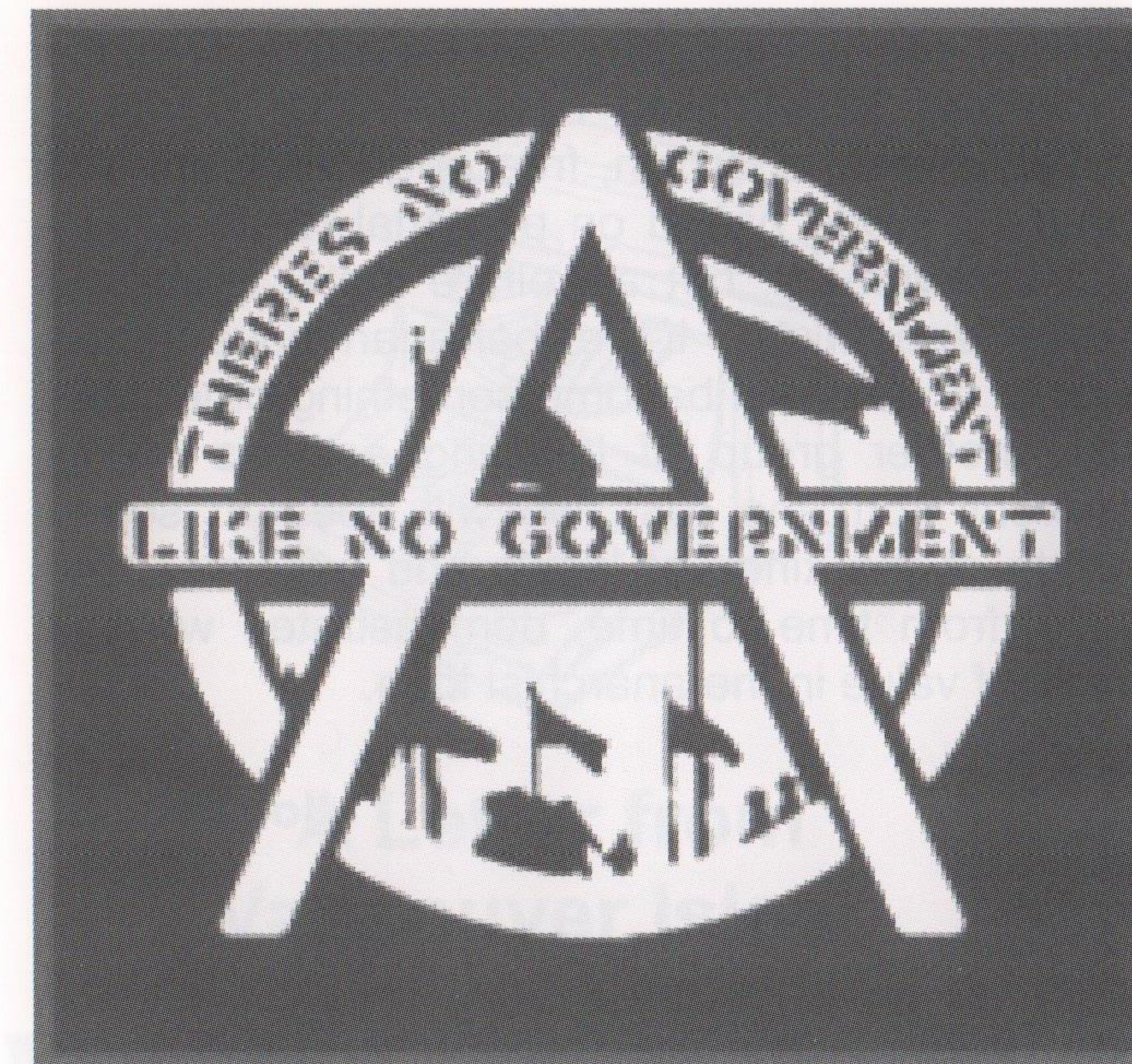
There is a little bit in there about the 1980s/1990s infiltration of the anarchist Class War group but it is very light on detail, basically regurgitated David Shayler. It doesn't mention the Janet Lovelace 1990s attempt to turn a Ploughshares activist into an informant, although it does mention a more recent example of the same sort of thing. The Peter Taylor documentary is mentioned, but it doesn't say very much about the Road Protest movement in the 1990s, which is another dog which doesn't bark here.

There is a mistake on page 71 – the title of G K Chesterton's book is wrongly given and ought to be *The Man Who Was Thursday*. Edwardian police infiltrating anarchists.

There is another more contemporary story about Lynne Watson in there, who infiltrated the Clown protest group, (Clown Insurgent Revolutionary Circus Army). This did not amount to a row of beans. There was a story about the clown telling people to 'tickle the tree' (pukel!) which took place on 3rd July 2004. It seems she was nicknamed 'Lynne the Cop' which rather suggests some of the people in Leeds rumbled her. If the cops wasted time and money infiltrating a crap political outfit like CIRCA to tell people to tickle trees then this is pretty desperate stuff and does not seem to me to be an efficient use of taxpayers' money. On the other hand infiltrating groups, starting long-term relationships with female members and fathering children with them says a lot about the morality of the secret state. Who knows how many other groups they infiltrated?

**Stephen Booth**

Stephen Booth is the former editor of *Green Anarchist Magazine*, a talented cartoonist and a fulltime carer for his wife Jane.



## Anarchy 2013

**B**ack in 2000 I published a broadside entitled "Where Are the Anarchists?" in which I argued that anarchists involved in the anti-globalisation movement said and did little that distinguished them from other, non-anarchist, participants in these movements. While they took pains to identify themselves as anarchists, employing militant tactics like black blocs and smashing windows and fighting cops for sport, they failed to articulate a libertarian critique of either international capitalism or the state. These anarchists appeared content with their image as the far left of the anti-capitalist movement, and did nothing to challenge the statist approach to restraining the predations of corporate capitalism that was promoted by their leftist allies in the movement.

This approach to organising, where anarchists submerge themselves in a broader movement but fail to challenge the more conventional ideas of their compatriots, has contributed to the growth of the movement - but as a result, that movement has largely lost its libertarian character. There are those who describe themselves (or are described by others) as anarchists who call for government action to "create" jobs, vote and/or encourage voting, and support government schools and health care. Anarchists write approvingly of militias, the Black Panther Party, and other decidedly authoritarian movements as models for libertarian organising. They fail to challenge identity politics and instead group themselves and others according to sexual tastes, ethnicity, genital organs, skin colour, "culture" and other arbitrary, unscientific and often nonsensical criteria. Instead of stepping

forward and challenging the state, critiquing authoritarian models of social change, and promoting respect for individuals and their unique wants and needs, many modern anarchists have chosen to uncritically join the mainstream left.

### Anarchists Against Anarchy

So, in considering the state of the anarchist movement in 2013, one has first to ask if there truly is a movement which deserves the name. While there are clearly anarchist individuals out there who write, speak and rabble-rouse in favour of libertarian change, they have been eclipsed by the politically correct leftists who now dominate the movement. These activists and authors largely focus on capitalism, and not the state, as the primary problem in the world. They either fail to criticise or openly advocate governmental methods of addressing people's needs and organising society.

This approach has existed to a greater or lesser degree among anarchists since the beginning of the movement in Europe. The early libertarians were very clear, at least in their writings, about the role of the state in supporting and defending capitalism, which they believed could not exist without government to protect it from its victims with its laws, cops, and military. Despite this insight, however, they were prone to authoritarian tactics, especially in their own organisations, such as Bakunin's secret societies, the Platformists, or the FAI/CNT. And when their movements were successful, however briefly, in replacing government institutions with their own alternatives, as happened in Munich, Ukraine, and Spain, the anarchists quickly adopted statist methods and joined coalition governments with other leftists or formed their own.

When anarchists participated in these regimes, they consistently supported or mandated the formation of economic and social collectives in areas they controlled. So while they were "flexible" in their attitudes (and practises) towards hierarchy, authority and the state, they were consistent in their opposition to capitalism and support for collectivism. Unfortunately, this was enough not just for them, but for their supporters internationally, who chose to focus on the (purported) benefits of collectivisation and made excuses for the authoritarian and repressive activities of the "anarchists" in power. Opposition to capitalism and support for socialisation of production and consumption has trumped opposition to the state and support for individual choice in social and economic organisation over and over in anarchist history.



While critics of anarchy have long painted the movement as full of (petit-bourgeois) individualists and anti-organisationalists, the majority of anarchists have been and still are neither. For far too many libertarians, any collective or cooperative is worthy of support and governmental welfare, education, or health care programs merit at least critical support, especially in the face of any movement toward freeing such "services" from the clutches of the politicians.

Anarchists crave the group, consensus, agreement, harmony. They believe the theatre of movements like Occupy will really result in social change simply because like-minded individuals come together and engage in feel-good herd behaviour. They are suspicious of individual initiative and individual responsibility and believe that only in the collective, the affinity group, the council, can people reach their full potential.

They have obviously chosen to ignore the lessons of history in favour of their vision of community.

## Where to Go from Here

Critical as I am of much of the libertarian movement, I still consider myself an anarchist. I continue to believe in and promote what is to me the core idea of anarchist thought, whether collectivist or individualist—that the individual, whether alone or in voluntary associations with others, should have complete freedom of thought and action, as long as they do not violate the equal freedom of others. This means for me absolutely no government, no authority, no hierarchy. It means suggesting libertarian alternatives to both capitalist and statist institutions, and not favouring one of these evils over the other. And it means recognising the authoritarian spirit which has infected the anarchist movement from the beginning.

The other reason I remain an anarchist is that despite all the hypocrisy and betrayal of principles that I have described here and elsewhere, the anarchist movement has always contained within it some seeds of the libertarian society so many of us really do yearn for. Whether that is found in the writings of E. Armand, the intentional community at Modern Times, the Modern School movement, the antigovernment abolitionists, or the houses of hospitality of the Catholic Workers, there have always been anarchists who have taken the idea of liberty seriously, who believe that free individuals, making free choices, can come up with all sorts of different approaches to life - approaches which do not require, nor benefit from, the oversight of the state or any other authority. None of these people or movements

were or are perfect, but they all made or make their best attempts to envision and live in a society free of coercion, free of government and force - a world based on personal responsibility and involvement, not a welfare state, even one run by "anarchists". If the libertarian movement is ever to once again become something other than just another group of left-wing activists hardly different from the rest, we will need to see a rebirth of the kinds of ideals and principles that have, from time to time, demonstrated what is really of value in the anarchist idea.

Joe Peacott

Joe Peacott is editor and publisher of Anchorage Anarchy, and was a founder member of the Boston Anarchist Drinking Brigade.



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## A Letter from Vancouver Island

**W**e have been busy this summer, in fact all year. We grow a lot of our own food and get some of what we can't grow from gifting, gleaning or gathering. We always get many pounds of corn, kale, apples, walnuts and potatoes that we do not grow ourselves from our friends. We give away a lot of tomatoes and any other excess we might have. When I first moved here seven summers ago, I planted grape vines, raspberries, rhubarb, boysenberries, strawberries, several figs and a peach tree. Everything with the exception of the peach has given an overflowing harvest this summer.

I have specialised in tomatoes, peppers and beans, with a few squash plants thrown in for good measure. The tomatoes we dry or cook and freeze as sauce. I dry some of the peppers too, and powder in a coffee grinder. The rest I make into Thai-style hot sauce. The beans we eat when tender and leave them to dry on the vines and shell later for soups and stews. My partner has her own allotment bed and grows a year's supply of garlic as well as carrots and beets which do not do well on our home plot.

There is also a good deal of gleaning and gathering that goes on around here. We did not join the gleaners this year, but have in the past. The association finds people with fruit trees (or any other food items) they wish to have picked. The harvest is divided three ways; the owner, the gleaners and the Food Share for hungry people. Every year there is a cider pressing and we usually end up with three gallons of apple or pear cider which we freeze for the winter. Blackberries grow profusely on waste land so everyone picks bucketfuls. We make jam or syrup out of them and sometimes wine. I also make my own wine, but have to confess I still use kits for the grape wine.

Growing and processing food isn't all we do.

Both of us have taken up music and are involved with a jam group called the Cedar Circle. Each week everyone meets at someone's home, volunteered the week before. We play for about three hours, each person taking a turn leading a tune. The Cedar Circle has been going for about nine years now and newcomers like ourselves can really learn a lot. I play *dobro* and regular guitar and my partner plays ukulele. She is also in a ukulele group and is getting gigs already. I too have done a few blues or comic songs at coffee houses.

I don't know what the scene is in the UK, but here on Vancouver Island a lot of young anarchists and counter-culturalists are really into old time and blue grass. You see some young woman in dreads playing a banjo and a couple of young fellows who look like latter day punk rockers but with mandolins and acoustic guitars and they are belting out this up tempo blue grass like they just came out of the mountains.

We have been involved with our neighbourhood association since moving here. Our goal as a neighbourhood association is to rebuild the community and prevent the sort of development that would change the ambience and demographics of the area. I served three terms on the board of directors, not standing again to allow a new person to get involved. I am also the editor of the association's blog. Ours is an old coal mining town and the neighbourhood was where the miners once lived. In association with the Nanaimo Museum and the City Planning Department, I put together a collection of photographs of miners and of the Great Coal Strike of 1912 when the army was called in to crush the workers. The photos were mounted on panels by the City and these have been shown at many different events. Each summer we put on a Miner's Heritage Day Picnic which about a thousand people attend.

The townspeople have been up in arms all this year. First off, there was an attempt to privatise the port. The idea was to sell a long term lease to some American corporation which would then drive out the fisher folk and make provisions for 90 foot yachts. Aboriginal people, fishers and all the neighbourhood associations were outraged. We created so much ruckus that the developer was scared off. We had no sooner won that battle when a major war was on with the city government. There is a beautiful park in the working class neighbourhood next to ours. The stream running through the park had been dammed by the coal companies a hundred years ago to form two ponds. The city wanted to destroy these dams, which would mean ruining the park, depriving working class and Aboriginal children a free place to swim and allowing



sediment into the stream and destroying the annual salmon run. No one is sure for the reasons behind this action, the City says earthquake risk, but no one believes them. More likely they want to allow developers into the flood plain and can't do that as long as the dams are a 'hazard.'

People immediately organised in opposition and two allied groups emerged. One was the "good guys" who lobbied and did media. The other were the "bad guys" who were ready to do direct action and civil disobedience. They were led by long-time environmental activists. About a hundred of us were ready to do CD and several hundred people were active in the other group. The City then tried to pull off a pre-emptive injunction, something straight out of 1984 – to stop us occupying the park, but the Supreme Court turned them down.

This was the first time I have been involved in a struggle in which the vast majority of the population were in approval. All kinds of people got involved, raised money, printed bumper stickers and tee shirts. Many people started questioning the nature of our supposed democracy and the bureaucracy that is the permanent government. It was now possible to discuss replacing city government with neighbourhood assemblies when people a few months previously would have thought the idea totally crazy. In many ways, this action was an anarchist's dream come true. In the end, the Chief of the *Snunymuxw Nation* stepped in and said that the City could not risk destroying their salmon stream and so the destruction was stopped, at least until next summer.

Vancouver Island and the adjacent islands have many anarchists. Victoria has an anarchist book shop and the annual book fair which attracts about a thousand people. We had an anarchist book fair in the old mining village of Cumberland and about 200 people showed for that. Nearby Denman Island has an anarchist co-housing village as well as a pirate radio station and two publications, "Stitches" and "Oystercatcher". One group from the islands that has gone international are the Mud Girls. There are now collectives of these cob-building women all over the place. We also have an active IWW branch of which I am a member.

I am still publishing Red Lion Press titles; only books not pamphlets. The latest is "Another View From Anarchist Mountain", a second collection of my anarchist essays. Just completed is "No Regrets", a personal history of the Vancouver counter-culture and anarchist movement. This is in the layout stage at the moment. Along with a co-author I am also doing a history of the IWW in

British Columbia and with a former member of the SPGB, am working on a book on monist philosophy. For this we are doing a lot of research into early materialist philosophy – such as the Godwin-Thelwall – Erasmus Darwin – London Corresponding Society, as well as contemporary cell biology, genetics and brain research.

Larry Gambone

Larry Gambone is founder of The Red Lion Press.

## 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.



## Beer, rugby and anarchy

What does the Ivy House pub in south east London and the Rochdale Hornets rugby club have in common, other than linking two of my favourite pastimes (beer drinking and rugby league)? The answer is they are both community owned. At a time when capitalism seems to be seeping into every crack and cranny of life it is good to know that at grass roots level there are a growing number of examples of community based co-operatives, sometimes in the most unexpected places. Actually talking about pubs, last year one of London's oldest (300 years old in fact), the Cross Keys in west London, when threatened with closure by developers, was taken over by squatters in an attempt to save it. As they pointed out pubs, can be the heart of a community, particularly in rural areas. Many are under threat. In fact around 26 are closing every week and the number grows.

Local people can now club together and buy their local. In fact not just their local. The Community Right to Bid was created in the historic Localism Act in September 2012. The Act means that communities can 'stop the clock' on the sale of valuable local assets and amenities like post offices, village shops or community pubs, giving them time to put in a takeover bid of their own and protect it for the wider community's benefit. Across the country people are coming together to self organise. Despite the onslaught of capitalism, self organisation and mutual aid endure.

Sport might seem one area that capitalism has really got a hold on, particularly football and particularly the top end but there are plenty of examples of anarchism in action in sport - even football - with community owned clubs like AFC Wimbledon. Not just footie. Rochdale were one of the founding clubs of rugby league. They currently play in Championship 1, alongside one of the newest league clubs, Hemel Stags. Like Rochdale, Hemel are also community owned. One of the things I loved about the anarchist

Colin Ward, who coined the phrase *Anarchy in Action*, was his ability to find examples of anarchism in the most unlikely places, from children's play to housing. It gives me hope that islands of hope continue, particularly if I can get a decent pint of beer!

Richard Griffin

## Left not right, Right most wrong, Anarchists right!

This short piece is about how governments, states, those imposed authorities that play at 'governing' us, are robbing us all to fund both their fantasies and their incompetence.

Anarchists have never had such a clear demonstration of the truth of their credo – based on Lord Acton's axiom that 'All power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely'. There are enough examples around the world now, without delving into history. 'Power' is very long in every dictionary, but it is the most dangerous self generated addictive drug, one which really needs a war against it.

On the first hand, the British government has such a large debt that if Britain was in the Euro zone it would be below Greece. There are three ways governments make money: taxes, austerity, and robbery. Our government, like many others, does all three. Robbery is the hidden one, like a cat's claws. Government does whatever it can to devalue its currency while blaming 'other things', which do contribute. But if you've got any savings, spend them on real things because their printed money devalues your money, as well as making their debts easier to handle. What about those poor sods who paid for a pension? Over the past decade they have lost 25% of their expectation. And how much do they steal through their various Ponzi schemes? *National Insurance* – insuring the nation for what? – depends upon people paying in now so it can pay out now. Is that insurance? As for those workers who assumed they were paying in for a state pension! Not to mention interest rates, stamp duties, bank bail outs, fuel taxes, VAT, insurance rates, *et cetera*.



But despite all that, some experts<sup>2</sup> believe that by 2015 the British debt will have doubled! That means whatever government we have will have to get really aggressive. Even, perhaps, squeezing that holiest of all, the Corporation of the City of London.

What should we do? Whatever you can to get out of their cash economy. Local currencies let you trade without using their money. Locally organised Communes à la 1871 should be considered. The aim should be to have a good way of living, with a small nominal cash income. It is possible to avoid much of their three ways of robbing you without being legally naughty.

On the second hand, what are they like in a gang? The United Nations. Recently they have done nothing about great wars and serious civil strife. Rwanda, Sudan, Syria, wherever you look in the recent past, they have allowed people to be slaughtered, abused in every possible way, while they mumble on and on.

Their rule is that a leader - monarch, prime person, or dictator - can do whatever he likes to the people he rules, and that is all OK, provided he does whatever he is doing within his national borders. Step outside and blue helmeted armed UN 'peace keepers' may come and look at you. They are the representatives of the states within the UN; nothing to do with people, they are incidental. They don't exactly wash their hands of them, though almost continual wringing goes on.

A lot of people may have difficulties to sort out. War can be seen as latter day birth control anyway. But as tribal peoples, we do not need atomic weapons, biological plagues, or chemical killers. All of which are produced by politicians to protect *their* power. We have managed without politicians before, we could manage without them now.

Colin Johnson

1. Mitch Feierstein 2012 *Planet Ponzi* Transworld Publishers, London .

2. UKpublicspending.co.uk

**"The important question is, therefore, not whether anarchy is possible or not, but whether we can so enlarge the scope and influence of libertarian methods that they become the normal way in which human beings organise their society".**

Colin Ward

## Exorcising the Arms Fair

Keith Hebden

**A** Church of England priest prepares to do spiritual battle against one of the world's largest Arms Fairs. Radio 4 Presenter William Crawley introduces an incredulous line of questioning on the "Sunday" program in response to an ecumenical plan, led by Anglican clergy, to exorcise an Arms Fair in London later that day. From the line of questioning, and my conversation days earlier with his producer, this 'Exorcism of the Arms Fair' went far beyond their understanding of both faith and public ethical debate. With two other Anglican priests and Christians and ministers from various traditions, we had decided to perform a public exorcism of the Defence Equipment Systems International (DSEI) Arms Fair.

That afternoon, on a usually quiet East London side road, we stood or knelt in a group of about thirty Christians, surrounded on three sides by a protective and supportive layer of protestors. I needed to keep the incense alight, manage the sprinkling of holy water, while negotiating with an increasingly disgruntled line of police. Singing, praying, and 'naming the powers' of violence and greed, the ability to stay calm and focussed were essential.

The DSEI arms fair takes place every two years in the docklands of East London and is the largest of its kind in the world. Weapons design and manufacture are one of the UK's biggest exports so the event is the highlight of the financial calendar. Those who regularly attend these events as protestors tell stories of smartly dressed traders who, when questioned, speak of the importance of war as "good for business". Or insist that weapons are neutral objects and that it's up to the buyer to make moral decisions about their use.

Many of the countries who come to buy or sell at this event are dictatorships; countries whose governments or factions wreak havoc on civilian populations or, like the US and the UK, have used them in a series of invasions in the name of democracy and the "war on terror". This year we were to discover, thanks to Caroline Lucas MP, that some companies were also displaying weapons of torture illegal under UK and



International law – the Speaker of the House of Commons made a little joke about it when Lucas raised the issue in parliament.

But the church is not immune from what Catholic activist Dorothy Day called "this filthy rotten system". A few days before our public act of witness I received a call from the Independent on Sunday asking me what I thought about the Church of England's financial investment – up to £10m – in General Electric (GE). GE is a massive technology firm that designs and makes components for weapons as part of its portfolio. Because less than ten per cent of its business is in arms they fall into the Anglican Church's "ethical" criteria for investment but they were to be one of the biggest players at this year's Arms Fair.

We arrived at the eastern entrance to the DSEI event at the Excel building in East London at around 3pm on the Sunday before the official Tuesday-start of the arms fair to find a great deal of activity already underway. Crowds of people of all faith and good faith had gathered at the entrance to block the road so that weapons companies couldn't bring their goods in and set up their stalls. Soon after we arrived the columns of police vans emptied out onto the pavements and the process of removing protestors began: by 3:30 most of the road was cleared. Our exorcism was planned for 4pm but getting out onto the road to do it looked like a challenge – although my bigger challenge was attempting to light the charcoal in the incense burner while holding it with the tips of my fingers.

At exactly 4pm we began with a song. Revd Chris Howson, an Anglican priest from Sunderland, spoke the preface:

Sisters and brothers we gather to exorcise the demons of Militarism and Violence: to call an end to the evil horrors of the arms trade and to cast out the spirit of warfare and barbarism from this place. We remember Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the continuing global arms race, the failure of the nuclear powers to observe their obligations under the Non Proliferation Treaty, the polluted earth, the world governed by fear instead of justice, the futility of deterrence, the waste of public money, the horrors witnessed by Syria, Iraq, Rwanda, Palestine, Egypt, Democratic Republic of Congo. We call for peace instead of war!



And with a song of peace on our lips we walked calmly, confidently, and non-violently onto the road, resisting the open-palmed punches to our shoulders, backs, and chests from police officers until, unable to stand up to them any further, we knelt in the middle of the road to pray. As I stepped out I let the words of the Bismillah fall from my lips – Bismillah Ar-Rahman Ar-Rahim – In the name of God, The Merciful, The Compassionate. Many of the weapons displayed at the Arms Fair would go on to be used in the Neo-liberal project of domesticating Islamic nations and it seemed fitting to use the beautiful prayer that begins every Muslim task and the chapters of the Qur'an at that moment of spiritual and political confrontation.

With the sweet smell of incense reminding us of the cloud of witness – those martyrs who went before us – we sang the words of Jesus in the Gethsemane Garden: "Stay with me, remain here with me, watch and pray..." I stood and turned to face the Excel building and began to sprinkle blessed water in that direction; this simple act led to the first threat of arrest from the police, "If you get another drop of water on me or my mate here, I don't care I'm going to arrest you".

I was threatened with arrest about a dozen times during the ten minutes it took us to complete our prayers. At first I explained to them that we would leave the road in a few minutes if they left us alone but eventually I was reduced to Gallic shrugs and finally a wry smile as I heard them arguing loudly among themselves about whether to arrest us at all. What moved me most was the way the other protesters rallied around us to bear witness to our witness, to shout down the police attempts to undermine our action and to decry any police violence. Many of these people would have good reason to distrust or dislike the institutional church and yet here we were together in common cause and with shared values taking care of one another.

Despite the seemingly exotic nature of our actions they are deeply rooted in Catholic social teaching, the Anglican "Marks of Mission," and the ministry of Jesus in Mark's Gospel. It was the narrative of the latter that best explains what we were doing: specifically Mark chapter 5, verses 1 – 20. The Evangelist Mark generously layers the story of Jesus' exorcism of the Gerasene demoniac (Mark 5: 1 – 20) with political and culturally emotive references, mostly obscured in English translations. Biblical scholar and activist, Ched Myers, in his socio-political hermeneutic has done a great deal to uncover this dimension to the story in the overall context of Mark's use of language and thematic / narrative landscaping of events.

Myers makes much of the discrete but out-of-place military language in this story. Pigs do not form a "herd" as most English translations suggest. The Greek word used suggests a *militia* of pigs who were *dismissed* and *charged*, down the bank and into the sea. While they resided in the man they were "legion" – the only military word interpreters normally choose to accurately translate and they use the religious titles of the foreigner "Most High God", when they address Jesus. All this frames the story in the socio-political crisis faced by local people under a foreign military occupation.

Our exorcism took place two days before the formal opening of the Arms Fair and was made possible by the work of Occupy London who had spent much of the day blockading the entrance and making the space that we used. During the week there were numerous revelations: as well as the revelations about torture instruments and the complicity of the Church of England, we learned of repressive regimes representing both buyers and sellers of Arms and of the hypocrisy of Western states who sell and use chemical weapons and weapons of mass destruction and then use the presence of these as a pretext for invasion.

Naming the powers, or 'systems', takes place in many ways. BBC's William Crawley, taking a sceptical line, accused us of creating a "publicity stunt". I replied that if he wanted to call it a stunt – which he was welcome to do – then we'd have to accuse Jesus of the same and unpacked the theology behind Jesus' interaction with the Gerasene demoniac, explaining the connections between empire, the market, and violence gleaned from that story. In reality Christian prayer was finding its proper home: doing business with what St Paul called "the principalities and powers" (Ephesians 6:4) and standing for the Shalom – the wholeness, peace, and justice – of God.

**Keith Hebden** is an Associate of the think tank Ekklesia.co.uk and an Anglican pioneer minister and Seeking Justice deanery adviser in Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, where he chairs the Diocesan Greener Churches Group. He teaches and writes on Dalit theology, Christian anarchism, green spirituality, and spiritual activism. His latest book, *Seeking Justice: The radical compassion of Jesus* plots experiments in faith based community organising and direct action. Some of his workshop material and other resources can be found at [Compassionistas](http://Compassionistas).

*Ched Myers, Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading*

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/church-of-england-has-up-to-10m-invested-in-arms-firm-8803469.html>



## Book Review

**Carlo Tresca Portrait of a Rebel:**  
Nunzio Pernicone, published by AK  
Press 2010 Price \$19.95 / £14.00 UK

Carlo Tresca (1879–1943) was a revolutionary involved in the labour movement and anti-fascism movements. Largely forgotten today, his memory and achievements deserved to be remembered and this is what this in-depth biography by Nunzio Pernicone should help to achieve.

Tresca was active in the early Italian socialist movement and acquired a reputation as a powerful speaker and leader in the labour movement around Salmona in the Abruzzio region. To avoid imprisonment for his activities Fresca emigrated to the USA. In 1904 where he was active among the soverscivi (left wing immigrants to the USA of Italian origins). The first few chapters of this book deal with Fresca's early activity in Italy and then in the USA, mainly based in New York. During this period Tresca's politics gradually changed from socialist to syndicalist to anarcho-syndicalist after about 1914, although, as the book points out, Tresca never really fitted into the conventional categories of radical typology.

Tresca, although not a member, was involved

with the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World) in, amongst others, the textile workers' strike in Lawrence, Massachusetts and the Merabi Range Iron miners strike of 1916. It is pointed out that Tresca was often in conflict with Union leaders (including IWW members) for their timidity and willingness to sell out their members.

Tresca was able to resist attempts to deport him from the USA. After the war he was active in the defence of Sacco and Vanzette. Here rivalry among the anarchists was probably a factor in limiting Tresca's participation. The followers of Luigi Galleani, an insurrectionary anarchist deported in 1919, were opposed to Tresca all his life.

The final part of the book deals with Tresca's activities in opposition to the fascists and later the Stalinists. It concludes with Tresca's murder and the question of who was responsible for this. The usual suspects are the communists, the mafia and the fascists. The book examines the evidence.

Pernicone deals with Tresca's relationship with Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, who later joined the Communist Party. The relationship seems to have been difficult, largely because of Tresca having affairs with other women but also due to some differing political views.

I would recommend this book to anyone interested in reading about Tresca and also leftwing radicalism, particularly in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s in the USA. Nunzio Pernicone is a history professor at Drescel University, USA. He is also the author of another excellent work 'Italian Anarchism, 1864-1892'.

**Dave Dane**

### Quote unquote

**"The anarchist conclusion is that every kind of human activity should begin from what is local and immediate, should link in a network with no centre and no directing agency, hiving off new cells as the original grows."**

**Colin Ward,**  
*Anarchy in Action*