

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

Larry Gambone

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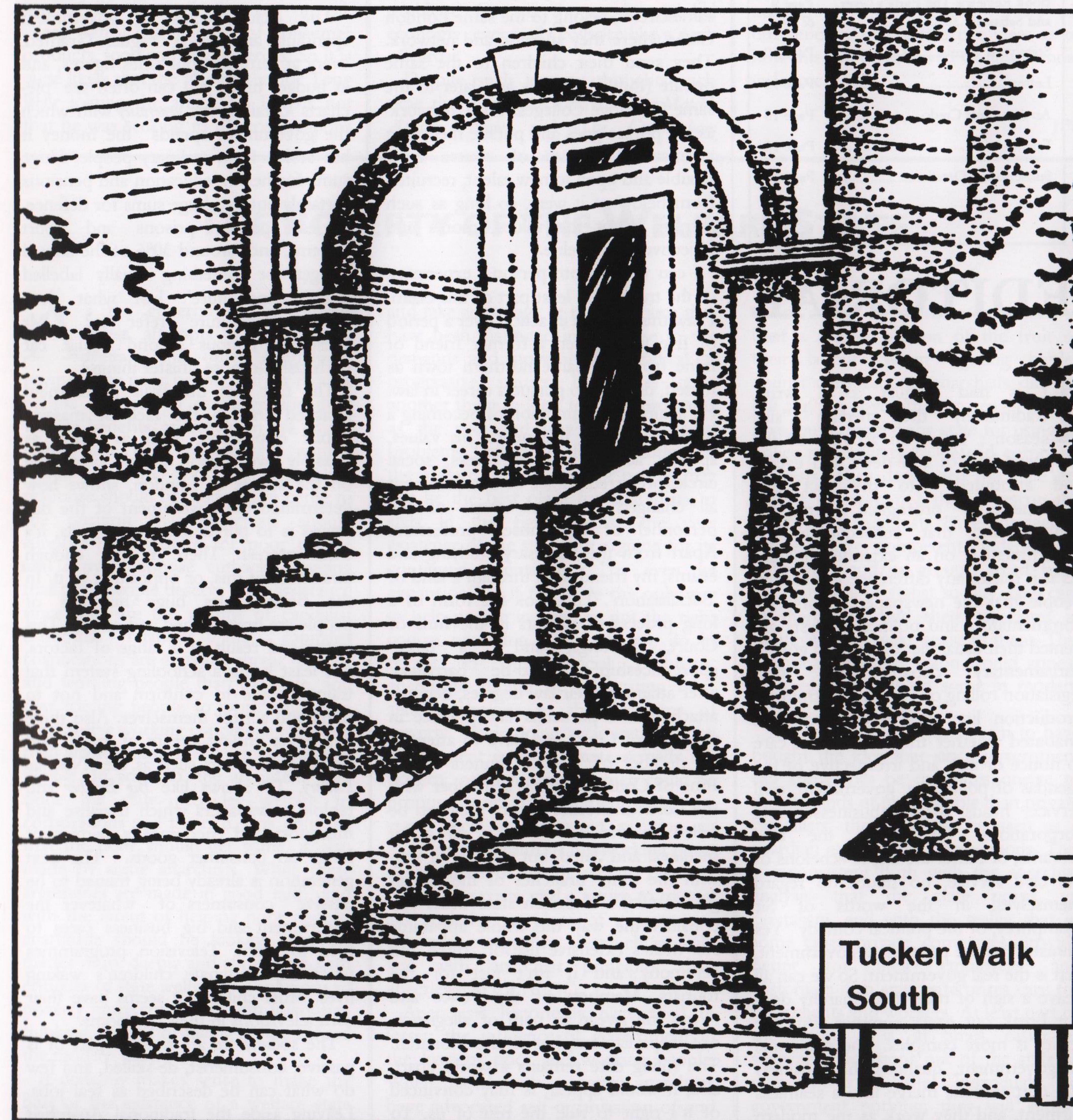
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CONTENTS

Editorial	Page 2
The Poverty of the Welfare State ...	Page 3
Tolkein's Ring: An Allegory for the Modern State	Page 5
Education, Education, Education ..	Page 6
Educating Rupert	Page 7
Identity Crisis	Page 8
Book Reviews: The Party's Over and Saharasia	Page 9 & 10
State your Terms!	Page 10
Letters	Page 13
An Anarchist Credo	Page 15
Friends of TL	Page 16
Subscription Details	Page 16

EDITORIAL

It is mid August as I write, traditionally the media's "silly season"; "silly" on account of the supposed lack of real news and events and attributed to the fact that parliament is prorogued until the autumn and that consequently the government is on an extended holiday. As if it makes any difference to ordinary people that the newspaper editors, TV commentators and political analysts are denied their usual diet of political gossip, parliamentary debates and new legislation rolling out of the Westminster production line. Real events continue unabated whether the mass media care to notice or not, and irrespective of the agendas of politicians, government, civil service, heads of big businesses and corporations. Of course the civil servants, or rather the upper echelons of the civil service, no doubt do regard themselves, in the words of Sir Humphrey, of the political comedy "Yes Minister" as the permanent government, that is the real government. So we can all heave a sign of relief that anarchy does not break out every summer. But the reality is more complex. The personnel of government, quangos, big business and corporations merge into a seamless garment, and they work as the modern

adage puts it 24/7. Chief executives of companies sit on quangos, they also sit as members of various government committees and boards of inquiry. Ex-civil servants, ex-ministers and ex-Prime Ministers join executive boards of companies. The members of the social strata of career officials and senior company executives are linked together in many ways as detailed in available works such as *Written in Flames* published by Hooligan Press and as detailed on a regular basis in magazines such as *Private Eye*. Members of this elite move in the same circles, belong to the same London Clubs where they socialise and network. They send their children to the same private (Public) schools and later to the same Oxbridge Colleges. They 'network' as the phrase goes and pursue their own interests. They are of course quite flexible and open to new talent, recruited from below as it were, so long as such recruits adopt the values, mores and objectives of the elite.

I can vouch from personal experience of the truth of at least part of this claim. I saw this process in action over a period of five years when a former friend of mine from the same northern town as myself, decided to pursue a career in law. He achieved his ambition of becoming a barrister. During this period his values, speech, accent, style of dress, social circle, preferred choice of entertainment all changed to match those of the personnel of his chosen profession. Apart from the necessary studying and exams, my friend went through a kind of 'Socialisation'. This took the form of a long process of dinners in the Inns of Court, meetings, and a quasi-apprenticeship. Would-be barristers, after attaining their law degrees, become attached to a particular law practice in the Inns of Court and have to attend a set number of formal dinners in the Inns of Court including a number with the Lord Chancellor before they can be called to the bar. This is all a bit medieval and dated, but not out of step with the other branches of the British government and British state when you consider the way the whole apparatus still makes extensive use of ritual and ceremony and it isn't just for the tourists. Members of the Police and Army still swear an oath of allegiance, not to parliament, but to the Monarch. The ruling elite remains a world apart, and, it would appear, is fully convinced of it's right to rule the rest of us. To

judge by the constant flow of regulations and edicts emanating from the government it is happy to dictate to us what it deems is good, bad or essential for our welfare and of course for the elite's welfare. The government of the day and its officials are perfectly content to take the produce of our labour, via taxation both direct and indirect, and to spend this wealth on their own priorities and agendas be it a muderous war against the people of Iraq or index linked pensions for MPs, civil servants and their friends.

The exact details of government spending are always vague. Granted, every government publishes figures, and at budget times you can often see 'pie-charts' detailing the *generosity* with which the government spends the money it has stolen from ordinary people. Huge sums for health, education and pensions certainly but also huge sums for defence, nuclear power, prisons and court systems, and around 30% of the annual budget for something usually labelled 'other expenditure'. Just what does 'other expenditure' refer to? Mr Prescott's famous second Jaguar car perhaps? Or more sinister things?

The fact that the Blair government attacked Iraq in the face of massive public opposition, with as many as possibly two million people protesting on the streets of London, shows how determined the government of the day always is to pursue it's own agenda, it's own interest. There is not enough awareness of this, or opposition to it. In the British Isles huge numbers of people are brainwashed and cowed. This is the end result of a range of factors, not least being a schooling system that trains people to conform and not to think and act for themselves. Also there is a never ending stream of 'bread and circus' type events such as the *National Lottery*, TV shows like *Big Brother* and tabloid newspapers which trivialise and misreport and encourage a permanent binge on consumer goods. The next generation is already being trained to be passive consumers of whatever the government and big business cares to feed to them. Television programmes practically dominate children's waking lives. Most children it seems have their own televisions in their bedrooms.

The society we are now all part of is passive, consumerist, de-skilled, and few do what can be described as real jobs. Leaving aside the traditional Anarchist

critique of the work ethic, just how many of the jobs we work at are really essential these days? HMSO (Her Majesty's Stationary Office) published government figures last year showing that only approximately 2.8 million eople are now at work in the manufacturing sector. The rest of us work in the service sector, but how many of these service sector jobs actually provide a service which matters in any way other than as being a means of distributing income? Nearly all manufactured products now come from abroad. This society and our way of life is *totally dependant* on oil, cheap petrol and imports of consumer products, food and raw materials. So it is quite likely that the true reason for Tony Blair joining the attack on Iraq is not that he was seeking to destroy weapons

of mass destruction or to safeguard the world from Saddam Hussein. The underlying reason was that he wanted to be on America's side, and by that act to ensure the continuing supply of those essential things needed for our unsustainable western way of life; that is dependable supplies of oil. Can this unsustainable way of life continue? The oil *will* eventually run out. Will the American government and other western governments, together with western and global corporate business interests, find a technical fix to this problem? Or will the modern global economy eventually collapse like a pack of cards?

Despite such gloomy thoughts each time the Anarchist journals *The Match!*, *Anytime Now!* and *The Cunningham*

Amendment appear on my doorstep I know I am part of another, different group of people, an elite of another kind, one that has the privilege of reading viewpoints and articles more informative and more honest in their portrayal of real life and in their discussion of real issues than anything that can be found in the mainstream printed or broadcast media. Sadly these journals only reach a few hundred people in the British Isles. Can such journals ever break through the barriers placed before them to reach the sort of numbers which might make a difference? Any constructive ideas as to how this can be achieved would be most welcome.

JPS

THE POVERTY OF THE WELFARE STATE

As the government, at various levels, attempts to cut back on welfare and other entitlement payments to poor people and/or require people to work in exchange for their welfare benefits, anarchists in the united states have been talking and writing about what the appropriate anarchist response should be. Some have come to the position that anarchists should support state welfare for poor people and actively oppose cutbacks, arguing that poor people deserve state assistance since they are the victims of capitalist economic relations, that capitalist corporations are a greater threat to poor and working people than the state, and that forcing people to work will cause even worse working conditions for many than already exist, further impoverishing people. In addition, the argument that, since the state provides welfare to corporations and the rich, it is only fair that the poor should get some, is also made by some anarchists. While these arguments are made in good faith, and with the intent of helping poor people, anarchists should be looking into the matter more deeply and coming up with critiques of state welfare and solutions to poverty more consistent with libertarian thinking, instead of falling in line behind the modern nanny state.

It certainly makes sense to make the best of the existence of a welfare state

and take advantage of the programs that have been instituted in response to the demands and movements of radical or progressive statists, but it is quite another thing to look to these programs as the preferred way to solve social problems. Calling for the dismantling of the welfare system for poor people may not be the best place for anarchists to start in the fight against the very existence of the state, but arguing for its continued maintenance "or even its expansion" as if this were the only way to help people in need, is not the right course of action either. As we do in regard to other social problems, anarchists should be advocating non-statist solutions to the problems of poverty. While doing away entirely with government is the ultimate remedy for poverty, other measures which could be proposed and implemented under the state, such as decreased taxation to increase the wealth of the working poor, deregulation of health care to decrease health care costs, and a return to mutual aid societies in place of extortionate insurance companies, are much more in line with anarchist principles than cheerleading for AFDC.

Anarchists historically have tried to lessen the influence of government in the lives of poor and working people. When faced with poverty, anarchists have advocated self-organisation of and

direct action by workers to secure at least a greater portion of the fruit of their labour. When fighting battles against corporations, anarchists did not call for the government to enact labour laws, but criticized the state for using its police and military to defend corporate interests. They demanded the state get out of the way, not that it rescue the poor. And anarchists have foreseen a future where competent, independent individuals and/or groups, freed from the restraints of statist society, take care of themselves and their associates in whatever ways make sense to them. This historical anarchist vision would appear to have been lost on some in modern times.

A number of anarchists seem to have bought the idea that since government can sometimes be more responsive to the demands of poor people than private capitalists, the state can be seen as a guardian against their depredations. This is inconsistent both with the anarchist analysis that the state props up capitalism, and with the reality that in some cases private companies provide better for their employees and customers than state enterprises care for their clients and workers. At least part of the reason it is, at times, easier to squeeze concessions out of the state, is that it costs the individuals in government nothing; they will simply

force working people to foot the bill for any increase in welfare benefits by increasing taxes. In the case of private capitalist enterprises, the owners of the business are not always able to pass on the costs of better employees' benefits to the consumer, and consequently may lose some of their profits if they give in to workers, demands for higher pay or other improved working conditions. But the only time either the state or capitalist businesses provide any benefits to anyone but themselves and their allies, is when they are pressured to do so. Welfare, social security, and other government benefit schemes were created in response to social movements, not out of governmental beneficence, just as good benefits in many private corporations are the result of strong labour movements which forced the owners to reimburse the workers for a greater portion of their labour than was the case previously. Governments and capitalist enterprises have largely the same interests, and both can be forced to make concessions by vigorous opposition from their subjects or employees.

While workers pressuring their employees for a better deal is simply a case of people demanding part of what is rightfully theirs anyway, recipients of welfare payments and other benefits are asking the government to take someone else's money and give it to them. Many advocates of maintaining the current welfare system, however, correctly state that it doesn't cost very much in the greater scheme of things. State spending on weapons of mass destruction and payments to corporations are each much more costly than welfare programs for poor individuals and families. Additionally, many working people, not commonly thought of as welfare recipients do, in fact, receive such benefits, as when middle class people get medicaid to pay for their nursing home expenses, or working people obtain free care from hospitals, the costs of which are covered by the government. While this is all true, this does not justify government theft of working people's money to give to someone else. The money raised from taxation to fund corporate welfare, AFDC, and medicaid is stolen property, as is the money from compulsory fees on insurance

companies to fund free care programs, which the insurers pass on to their customers. The rich don't pay taxes, and the very poor don't pay taxes. It is the huge number of working people in the middle who do, and who support the other two groups. And, while many in the middle get some of their extorted money back in the form of benefits, most of them pay out more than they receive, otherwise there wouldn't be any left for the rich and the poor.

The rich and their corporations are wealthy because they or their ancestors were able unjustly to acquire some of the wealth produced by others. They were able to do this only because the state and its police and military support the institutions of profit, interest, and rent which transfer money from working people to those who "own" businesses, banks and dwellings. Rich people don't deserve the wealth they already possess and certainly should not receive any of the money that is stolen directly from workers by the government, or any of the other advantages they receive at the expense of taxpayers. Among the poor people who receive money or other benefits from the state, on the other hand, there are those who are in genuine need. Some are truly the victims of circumstances largely beyond their control, and others have made bad choices and expect or hope that others will bail them out. But there are also welfare recipients who are simply parasites who feel that others should work to support them in the lifestyle to which they've become accustomed (just like the rich) Being poor does not make one virtuous or deserving. However, since at least some poor people are deserving of assistance it is preferable that tax money fund AFDC, medicaid, and food stamps, rather than corporate welfare and the military, but none of the recipients, rich or poor, are entitled to the money extracted by force from working people.

Since such forcible transfers of money are not acceptable, we need to seek other, non-coercive means, to enable people to better fend for themselves. As mentioned earlier, tax cuts, health care deregulation, and voluntary mutual aid societies would all mitigate poverty, even if implemented in a statist society. Getting rid of the state and its

protection of capitalist economic relations entirely will produce even more options for people to make their own way, resulting in higher incomes; cheaper goods including health care, food, and housing; and, consequently, many fewer needy people. The end of government will mean the end of involuntary poverty, and therefore the end of the need for much of what now constitutes welfare. The small number of people unable to work who need assistance from the community can easily be helped by one form or another of mutual aid, depending on the economic structure of the community in which they live.

Anarchy is based, at least in part, on the idea that simply getting government out of the way would allow people to look at and solve their problems all by themselves. This also applies to poor people. They are generally not helpless incompetents who have no options other than having the state look out for them. In fact, poor people are victimized by corporations not because the state has failed to protect them, but because the state has prevented them from protecting themselves. Laws and other government action preserve capitalism with its profit, interest, and rent, all of which are theft from working people of all classes. Without the state and its armed thugs in the police and military, capitalism would not survive for long, since people would simply keep what was rightfully theirs and stop paying rent, do away with the banking monopoly, and work their factories and businesses for themselves. We don't need state welfare, we need state abolition.

Joe Peacott

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Tolkein's Ring: An allegory For The Modern State

Boromir speaks: "I do not understand all this," he said. "Saruman is a traitor, but did he not have a glimpse of wisdom? Why should we not think that the Great Ring has come into our hands to serve us in the very hour of need? Wielding it the Free Lords of the Free may surely defeat the Enemy. That is what he most fears, I deem. The Men of Gondor are valiant, and they will never submit; but they may be beaten down. Valour needs first strength, and then a weapon. Let the Ring be your weapon, if it has such power as you say. Take it and go forth to victory!" - The Fellowship of the Ring Chapter Two: "The Council of Elrond" (pp. 280-1)

Sam speaks: "But if you'll pardon my speaking out, I think my master was right. I wish you'd take his Ring. You'd put things to rights. You'd stop them digging up the gaffer and turning him adrift. You'd make some folks pay for their dirty work."

Galadriel replies: "I would" she said. "That is how it would begin. But it would not stop with that, alas! We will not speak more of it. Let us go!" - The Fellowship of the Ring Chapter Seven: "The Mirror of Galadriel" (p. 382)

A BLOODY GOOD READ

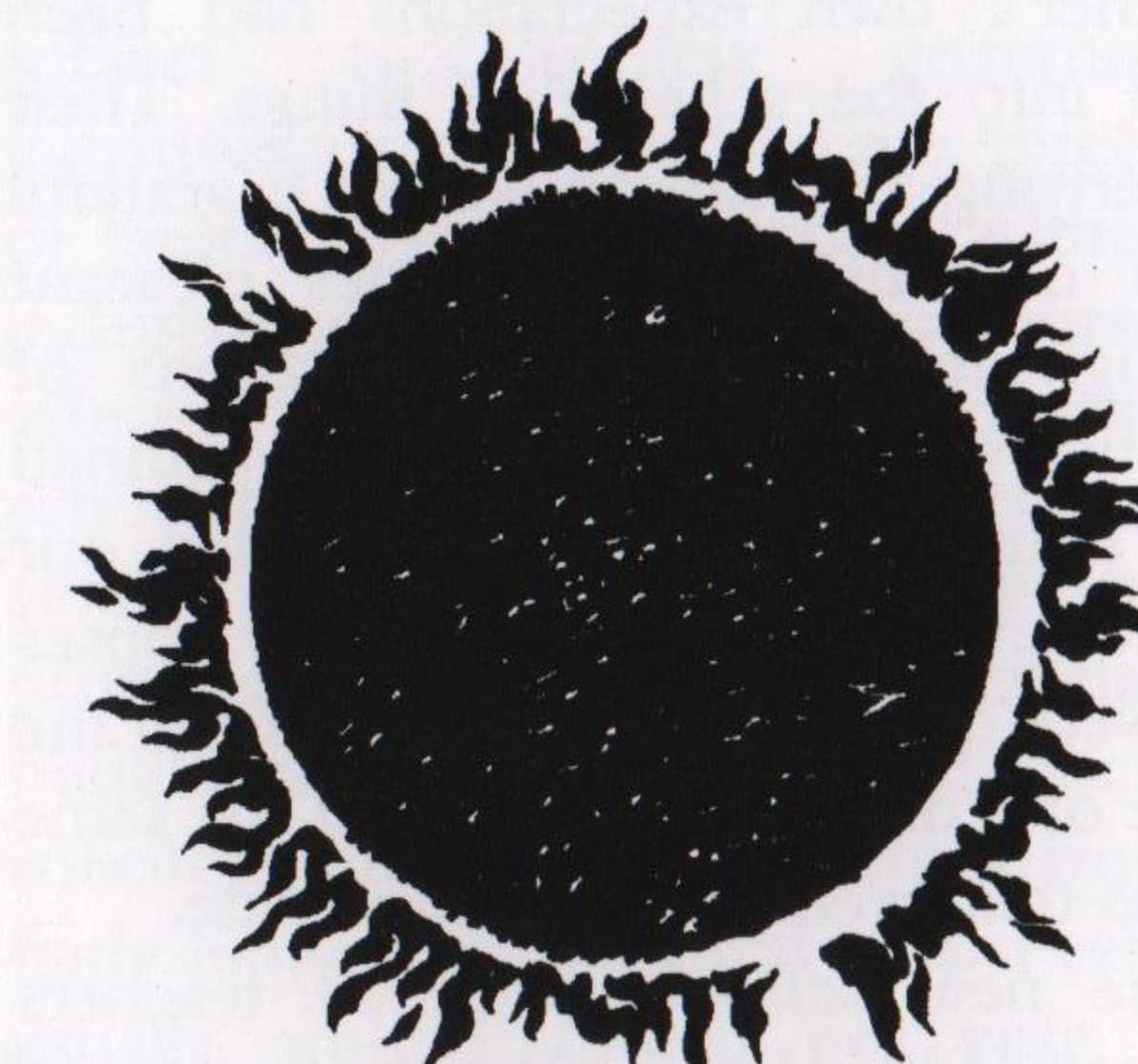
For me, The Lord of the Rings works on every level, and I refer to both the magnificent new motion picture and the trilogy of books, which I first read in the early 1970's as a child and have re-read many times since. It works on the most basic level as a glorious epic, rich with its own mythic cycle that borrows from Celtic, Nordic and Saxon traditions. Simply put, it is a bloody good read, and the motion picture captures that most effectively, editing and abridging where needed without doing a fatal violence to the source.

FRODO IS US

Yet The Lord of the Rings can be read in many other ways as well. It also works extraordinarily well as a series of quite deep allegories. Certainly many people have subjected J. R. R. Tolkien's remarkable epic to the Bunsen burner of allegorical analysis before, particularly

those looking to divine a racist subtext. I have only ever read a couple such works and, to be honest, was unimpressed. I have read a few summaries of others but it has always struck me that the arguments of this or that critique of his work usually skirt around the core issue, for there are really only two facets of the story that truly matter: Frodo, and the Ring itself.

I have always thought that the allegorical meaning of The Lord of the Rings is starkly obvious and quite profound. Mankind in all its varied forms and mythic archetypes can be found with the story, yet in truth the reader is presented with a single representation of themselves: Frodo Baggins, the Hobbit. Frodo is us.



PERSONAL MORAL COURAGE

The entire story is about Frodo and his relationship with the Ring. Everything else is the supporting artifice. Frodo is Everyman, who does not choose the world in which he lives, rather the world is thrust upon him by forces at first seemingly outside his power to influence or even understand fully. It is Frodo, more than any other character, who dwells most upon the issue, not just of dynamic reaction to events, but of moral choice. Although surrounded by mythic heroic archetypes of every shape and form, Frodo is physically puny, banal by predisposition and would be hard pressed to intimidate an irritable rabbit. Yet he is indeed strong, in that his strength is entirely moral strength ... and because he chooses to exercise that moral strength, in the end he has no equal. We are

shown that it is from personal moral courage that all other strengths derive and that all the weapons in the world count for little without that.

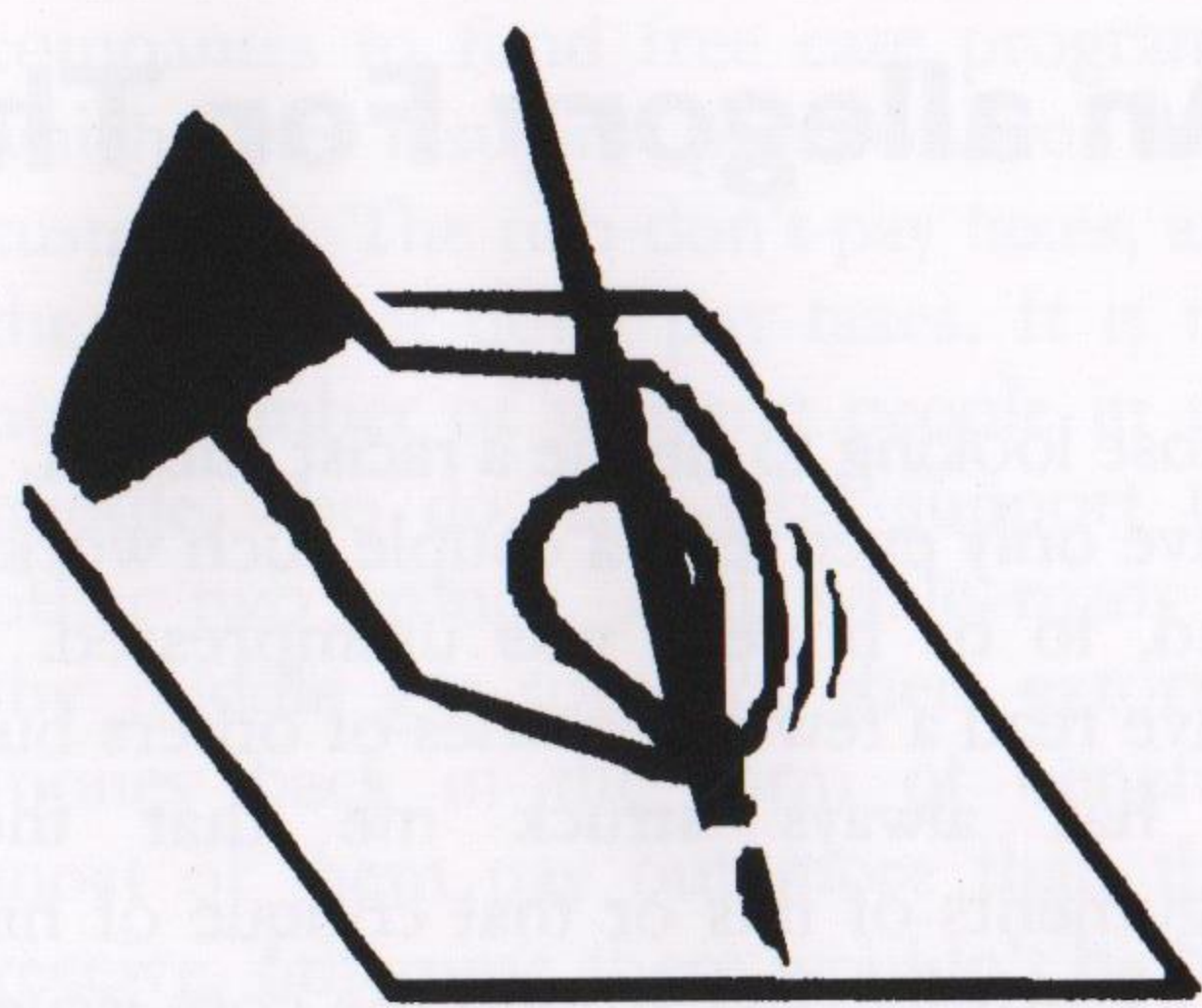
THE RING IS THE ANTITHESIS OF INTERPERSONAL MORALITY

So if the Hobbit is us, then what is the Ring? The Ring is everything which Frodo is not. He is a weak little man, vulnerable and multifaceted. The Ring is strong, almost indestructible and pure in its single minded male violence. It tries to corrupt all who touch it or are ever associated with it and it is about absolute and pitiless control of others. Frodo deals not through agents or proxies, but directly, face to face ... The Ring makes its wearer invisible and extends its power terribly through its influence over the other Rings. It is the antithesis of interpersonal morality. No matter how pure of heart the person who wields it is, no matter how just their motivation for taking that power upon themselves, the end result is always corruption. Yet the lure of such power is so overwhelming that only the most truly moral can resist it when it is dangled in front of them: Gandalf and Galadriel are both offered the Ring but refuse it. Elrond too sees it for what it is and will have none of it: "We cannot use the Ruling Ring. That we now know all too well. It's strength, Boromir, is too great for anyone to wield at will, save those who have already a great power of their own. But for them it holds an even deadlier peril. The very desire of it corrupts the heart. Consider Saruman. If any of the Wise should with this Ring overthrow the Lord of Mordor, using his own arts, he would then set himself on Sauron's throne, and yet another Dark Lord would appear" (page 281)

Powerful, corrupting and impersonal. The Ring is of course an allegory for the modern state.

Perry De Havilland

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Education Education Education

Pinkie the Pupil wants to know why admirers of Compulsory Education are so attached to custodial metaphors; governors, suspension, attention, authorities, exclusion, discipline, terms, inspectors, detention, deputies.

The Cunningham Amendment

Me? I was brought up in Wythenshawe, a vast post-war housing estate, designed to replace the smog-ridden, damp-infested, rat-traps of middle-Manchester.

This huge encampment of concrete roads and sparkling new houses seemed the ideal solution to a city desperate to rebuild industry and house a much-needed workforce. Make no mistake. These were modern houses, with generous gardens, inside toilets and room enough to accommodate a growing family. My earliest memories contain the image of a young couple dancing through the rooms of their newly acquired council house.

The estate contained everything we tenants could wish for. There were clinics and dentists and opticians who offered their services to one and all. There were pubs and there were churches and there were half a dozen shopping precincts. And new schools were being built: Shimmering in glass - the very best of modernist design. Like a well thought-out zoo, Wythenshawe had everything the planners assumed we needed.

It didn't take too long to discover the estate was enclosed with real boundaries. The enormous swathe of Cheshire countryside on which Wythenshawe was built came with a resentful social price. True, the adjoining leafy avenues of wealthy Cheshire residents could be

freely walked down. We were allowed to gaze in awe at their gravel driveways and ivy-laden facades. But the alarmed eyes that peered back confirmed that the two worlds would never meet.

Consciously or otherwise, the planner's own expectations had been built into the scheme of things. Their underlying assumption was of a grateful class of tenants with homes pleasant enough to breed new generations of satisfied workers. But those that planned our houses and those that pulled our teeth never lived in the council houses we were quartered in. Life seen from the scale of a drawing board is not the same life as that lived on a housing estate.

The new schools recruited teachers from middle class enclaves outside of the estate. These teachers were good at getting us to walk on the correct side of the corridors: "DON'T RUN!" "KEEP TO THE LEFT!" The infamous Eleven Plus examination was more like a blood test that divided us into the thick and the odd hopeful who disappeared to a distant Grammar School.

My Secondary Modern School taught me how to keep my head down and evade both the official punishments of the teaching staff and the unofficial blows of playground bullies. My abiding career-plan, right up to the end of my stay, was to be a supertramp, gentleman of the road whose purpose in life was nothing more than to cross the next horizon. In a sense it was a desire to escape an overcrowded council house, a house ruled by an angry father wiped out by overtime and a miserable marriage. It was also an escape from a mind-numbing educational system. I could see no sense in metalwork or technical drawing. I was

one of many unwilling scholars who had been written off as losers. Few of us saw any reason to embrace the values of compulsory education. Wythenshawe, like its schools, was designed to run on an economic model of education. By definition, there were many failures. I was just one of them.

There were no mentors in my childhood life. Guidance was already ordained. One simply did not approach people of a higher caste with childish questions. My dream of the road was to clash with the expectations of others. At the age of fifteen I ended up in the mail-room of a large textile company.

I reached the age of 29 years before I met my first teacher. I had enrolled on a basic shop-steward course and at one session an elderly chap turned up to give a talk on pensions. His lesson was an entirely new experience. What gripped me was not so much the subject, although that was clear enough, it was the passion and the care that the man put before us. His subject breathed with life. He carried an enthusiasm that infected us all. Most of us in his class gave up our dinner-break to ask him questions about trade unions and well, life itself.

I learned everything I needed to know about education on that morning. It was a huge turning point in my life. His approach jolted me out of the inbred feeling that I was unworthy of knowledge. This was a teacher, a master at his craft, and one I learned later, unbowed by the restrictions of bureaucratic expectations. He left me with reams of questions for the future and a sense of bitterness over the

education I had been forced to undergo as a child.

Ever since that morning my mind has bubbled over with questions about education. I have wanted to know what would happen if we subtracted the social control element from the education equation? What would happen if the emphasis in learning was shifted to the kindling of curiosity and the building of confidence? Suppose teachers were elected to their posts on the strength of their passion for the subject? Can we imagine education as primarily, a voluntary activity, whereby seekers after knowledge went willingly to school to work alongside teachers.

We have fully entered the regions of a free society when we can talk about teachers advertising their own individual methods of working. A real non-hierarchical community where students are encouraged to work out mutual contracts with teachers of their choice. I have never seen any value in enforcing knowledge onto anybody. I see little value in running classes of 35 children who may, or may not be, interested in what is being taught. Compulsory education means that teachers become hoarse from shouting and stressed from the myriad forms of anxiety. No teacher and no seeker should ever arrive at a school in a state of fear.

But Faith must be found from the demotivated youth of today. Ways of reformulating our approach to young people must be argued for. Let us remember that in Elizabethan England, an age of enterprise and discovery, teenagers were commonly found to be traders, adventurers and captains of ships.

Over and over again, the message is before us: Freedom cannot be planned for or imposed upon anyone. Freedom can only be taken and what must be refused is an educational system that produces legions of children who are failures. In itself this is criminal. Anarchists know who the real criminals are and they know how to recognise real crimes. Let us turn economic education on its head and leave teachers and students to work together as co-investigators. And not a single one of us will be one groat more stupid.

Peter Good

Educating Rupert

(not to mention Tom, Ricardo, and Harry...)

From September 1998 until July 2003 I taught economics and politics at Eton. Eton, of course, is shorthand for everything that is wrong in our class system. An entire system of privilege and injustice seems to be encapsulated in those four letters. Eton is privilege, Eton is hierarchy, Eton is an easy superiority, Eton is the training ground for the elite. It is these things, and, in consequence, it reveals a good deal about the education system in the UK. For what goes on at Eton is not what goes on in the overwhelming majority of all other schools, both maintained and independent.

Maintained, ie state, schools are subject to endless government initiatives, usually based on the 'three Ts' of targets, testing, and tables. Although independent schools are not, directly, affected by this regime, most private schools have been forced to adopt similar goals and methods. The typical private school is a day school serving the middle class business people, doctors, solicitors, university lecturers - from a fairly limited geographical area. Fees are usually around £9,000 per year, and these schools are in competition with, typically, one or two similar schools, and a range of state schools in the area. In Liverpool, for example, the two main independent schools are Merchant Taylors' School to the north of the city, and Liverpool College to the south. There are a number of other, smaller, private schools, and a range of state schools, with some grammar schools surviving on the Wirral. The parents of prospective pupils are well aware of the framework for educational 'achievement' that has been laid down by successive governments over the last two decades, and simply expect private schools to out-perform the various targets which state schools have to aim at. In consequence, the regime in most private schools is merely a concentrated version of that available in state schools, only with selection by ability to pay, sometimes selection by aptitude, plus more sport (essential to keep macho

fathers happy), music, and a sense of social superiority (essential to keep snobbish mothers happy). But this is not what happens at Eton, or the handful of other schools in the same 'premier league'. For the sons (and, in some schools, daughters) of the richest and most powerful people in the country need a different regime from that applied to the *hoi polloi*. And what is interesting from an anarchist perspective is that many facets of the education system for the elite are remarkably anarchistic.

Most people have some ideas of the negative aspects of an elite education, famously encapsulated in Lindsey Anderson's 1968 film, *If...* (influenced by Zero de Conduite, the 1933 classic by the anarchist filmmaker, Jean Vigo). This view of elite education stresses what may be best described, to adapt a famous Churchillian description of the Royal Navy, as 'rum, buggery, and the lash' - or 'cocaine, buggery, and discipline' to bring the image more up to date. However, this is both a caricature, and only part of the picture. For such a schooling also contains, perhaps surprisingly, large amounts of what many anarchists would recognise as being education. If schooling is the regimented, hierarchical, disciplined, closing down of young people, then education is the free, co-operative, opening-up of young people. In the latter schema, adult staff are primarily facilitators. In this model, education has best been described as a 'conversation between generations'. From this point of view, education is, therefore, the facilitation of environments where people can develop their own interests, can learn to be autonomous individuals, and have the space and opportunity to interact in groups characterised by flat, open, forms of organisation. In schools like Eton, there exists an active culture, driven by the young people, which can be seen to match this paradigm, and is a clear expression of Colin Ward's exposition of 'anarchy in action'. Interestingly, it is this culture which gives the children of the elite yet another advantage in society; yet another advantage that is rarely open to school students (and teachers) in most other maintained and private establishments. These unfortunates are tied down by the restrictions and the discourse of bean-counters like David Milliband, and all

the other Thatcherite / New Labour clones.

At Eton, I was 'master-in-charge' of the Orwell Society, named after one of Eton's most famous radicals. As usual at Eton, the title 'master-in-charge' did not mean that I was 'in charge'. Instead, the society waxed and waned from year to year depending on the desires and activities of the boys who came together to run the society. The Orwell Society is not the only radical society, as the school's other great radical hero, Percy Bysshe Shelley ground-breaking atheist, revolutionary and archetype of the 'live fast, die young' image of the Romantic poets also commemorated in the Shelley Society. Again, the master-in charge of the Shelley Society sees himself as a facilitator, a booker of food, a payer of expenses, an encourager, not a boss or a minder. In my last year at Eton, the Orwell Society was run by an extremely active, fluid group of boys, including the son of an SAS colonel, a direct descendent of Lord Salisbury, and various other offspring of the wealthy and powerful. These young men were absolutely dedicated to the anti-war campaign, and organised an endless stream of events to support the anti-war movement. They attended all the London demonstrations, they handed out leaflets in the local towns, and they campaigned within the school - they organised.

Interestingly, the government's attitude to state school pupils being involved in much of the anti-war activity was that any absences from schools would be treated as 'truancy', and punished. The members of the Orwell Society spoke to the Head Master, and convinced him that their involvement was necessary, and that it was their right. His response was to accept their arguments. There was no punishment for those activists. Their involvement with the campaign, their willingness to allow 11 boys, of whatever year, to take part in the organisation of their society was a perfect example of 'anarchy in action'. I was there because an adult had to be hanging around, but I was not significant. It was their society, not mine, not the school's.

There are also a large number of other societies - 56 in the summer of 2003. A few of these societies are dominated by those teachers who are unable to allow the boys to run anything. Teachers who are, without doubt, control freaks, often sad little people clinging to little bits of

power, any power over anyone. But they are more than matched by those members of staff who are willing to be facilitators rather than dictators. There are also five magazines, which, unlike many school magazines are not merely the censored mouthpieces of the school itself. All this contrasts with my experience of other schools, in both sectors, which are so driven by the demands of government, by domineering parents, by the authoritarianism of senior management (sometimes careerists of limited experience, and limited education), by their fear of what young people might 'be up to' if given any real freedom, and by their desire to enforce a regime geared above all else to league tables. In such schools, young people are frustrated, classroom bound, driven, bullied, and trained to endure boredom, while expecting to be 'spoon fed' at every turn, as they know that 'results' are more important to the school than anything else. It is a balance of tension, not a conversation between generations.

I do not wish to suggest that Eton is a model for education. I merely wish to highlight the irony that the better elements of life at Eton are those that are educative, and, further, to highlight the irony that whereas the wider schooling experience is just that - 'schooling' - such a limited model is not seen by those with great power as being applicable to their own offspring. Etonians were always horrified to learn that the school day for most pupils in the UK is from 8.45 - 3.30/4.00, without interruption. Etonians spend only half a day in the classroom each day. Similarly, no Etonian would wait for a teacher to start a club or society, or to dragoon anyone into it, they would do it themselves, asking an adult along to do the paperwork, and to bounce ideas off, but not to run the society, or to be 'in charge'. There is a lesson here somewhere, and it is a lesson about our economic system, our class system. I'm not a school teacher anymore, and in one way, I'm glad, because there are fewer and fewer opportunities to help young people to, in the words of Jean Vigo, 'make their way into the sky, into freedom'.

Steve Cullen

IDENTITY CRISIS

The latest 'reason' being given for the introduction of compulsory identity cards is that they will make us safer and this 'benefit' outweighs the loss of freedom and privacy they will bring. However even a limited knowledge of where the real threat to the citizen comes from when he or she is required to carry one reveals that they will make our lives more, not less, dangerous.

While Britain hasn't got a compulsory identity card we haven't had a major terrorist attack in years, compare this with places like Israel, which has them and is regularly subjected to suicide bombers and other forms of terrorism. Then consider that the 80% of countries with the highest incidence of terrorism since 1986 have identity cards and the evidence points towards them causing rather than preventing terrorism.⁽¹⁾

Not only can it be statistically proven that identity cards are linked to non state terrorism, there is also a long history of their use to facilitate state oppression and attacks upon portions of their own populations. The first of these that springs to mind is the Holocaust in Nazi occupied Europe, where the presence of questions about religion on census forms combined with the latest technology in the form of card reading machines supplied by I.B.M. subsidiary Dehomag allowed the nazi's to compile lists of Jews' names and addresses in every town they occupied.⁽²⁾

Of course, if those who support identity cards are to be believed, the possession of a card using the latest technology to label them as Jewish made them safer and the holocaust is a lie. History says different!

Then the cards made their appearance in Africa where they were essential to the Apartheid regime providing the basis for the pass laws which determined where you could live and who you could have sex with, all recorded on your card. This shows how the state uses one classification on the card to criminalise parts of peoples' private lives.

They also proved useful in Rwanda, where the card said 'Hutu' or 'Tutsi' which made it easier for the gangs

carrying out the genocide to be sure they got the 'right' people.⁽³⁾

When these facts about the way governments treat their populations once they have identity cards are combined with the fact that they will be linked to almost all financial transactions and access to medical services etc, the potential for the state to control the lives and deaths of people it finds inconvenient by freezing any funds they have and denying them medical help, becomes a matter of life and death. Whether future governments are Stalinist left or racist right doesn't really matter. Once they realise they have this power they will be tempted to use it.

The above reasons, when combined with the repeated attempts to take away the right to be outside without a particular piece of documentation from the state, each time for a different reason, show that the state is determined to remove this freedom and must be a cause for concern to all Anarchists and Libertarians. I urge you to resist them both before and after they are introduced. Poll Tax style non-compliance might be the only way to defeat this attack on freedom and we must be ready to withstand the accusation that by seeking to protect our freedom we are helping terrorists.

Rory Bowskill

(1) Based on figures published by the International Policy Institute for Counter Terrorism. Israel

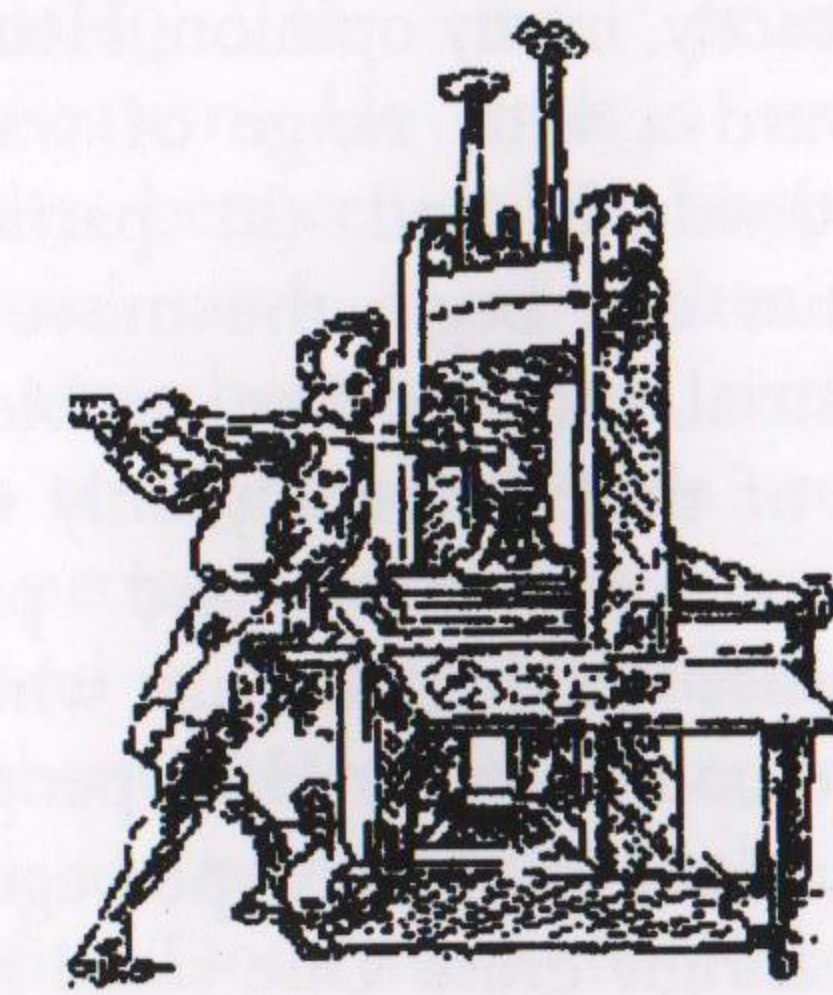
(2) IBM and the holocaust, the strategic alliance between Nazi Germany and America's most powerful corporation, Edwin Black, Crown publishing NY

(3) Against Identity Cards, Sean Gabb, Political Notes 105, Libertarian Alliance

Biographical Note: Rory Bowskill grew up in Nottinghamshire before moving to Norwich to study Anthropology and natural resource development for his BSc in 1996. He is a regular contributor to the letters page of local papers and other mainstream publications. Always radical he realised his ideas were called Anarchism in the early 80's. He does several part time jobs and has been active on a range of local and international issues.



Book Reviews



The Party's Over

Heinberg, Richard "The Party's Over: Oil, War and the Fate of Industrial Societies". New Society Publishers, Gabriola Island, Canada, 2003. Pbk, xii, 274pp. Graphs, bibliography, notes, index. ISBN 0-86571-482-7 \$17.95

This book will not be popular in many circles, not least those who blithely assume that not only is industrial society a benefit to humanity, but that it can be sustained indefinitely and spread to the ever expanding population of the world. Such people are in for a nasty shock if this book is to be believed and without pre-empting the review it should be.

In a way what Heinberg has achieved with this book is an update to the 1960/70's pioneering works on ecology. The basics of the science of ecology have not changed in the intervening years and neither has the final prognosis. What Heinberg has done is to update the figures and spell out, albeit in an North American context, what is going to happen to modern industrial society.

The major constraints, as they have always been, are physical. However one changes the details of human society, the economy, the social forms, even whether there is a state or not, the same physical limits apply. And, put simply, the fact is that we live on a finite planet with finite non-renewable resources and we have built our current civilisation on the ruthless exploitation of those resources (not to mention the exploitation of the global flora, fauna and less fortunate humans.) The chief problem is, if you need reminding, oil. We have reserves of coal which, if carefully managed could last a couple of centuries; and there is

the contribution that renewable sources of energy could make to our needs. But the main problem is that oil reserves (no matter how well you manage them) are finite and at present the industrial nations of the world (and the would-be industrial nations) are almost totally dependent on them for transportation and for a major percentage of energy needs. Oil (and natural gas) is also a main resource used for fertilisers, pesticides, and other industrial agricultural needs. In short, without it modern agriculture will collapse, our ability to grow things will diminish along with our ability to move surpluses to where they are most needed.

In blunt terms, modern industrial society is headed for the buffers. Once you accept this the main questions that arise are: what can be done to slow down the impact, and what survival strategies can people make (individually and collectively) for long-term survival? On a personal level, given human population has overshot the sustainable carrying capacity of the planet, how do you make sure you're one of the 20-25% who might still be around to make the new society?

The first chapter of the book will give the reader the basic grounding in ecological science, whilst the second is an all-too-brief historical summary of how we got into the mess in the first place. Even if the reader feels confident this is all old hat, I'd recommend this as a refresher course. This is followed by a discussion on the nature of the problem as it pertains to oil resources and includes a detailed rebuttal of the critics of the oil resource problem. One can only assume these people are living on a different planet. The sad fact is, no matter how resourceful people become or which economic theory or model you prefer, the simple fact is the usable reserves of oil are finite and we are currently using them at an ever-increasing rate. This obviously cannot continue indefinitely.

Heinberg then gives a brief run down of the alternative energy resources and strategies; and what contribution they might make to our total energy requirements. Here the important fact to grasp is that none, singly or in aggregate, can replace the amount of oil currently being used. In future we are going to have to make do with less fuel, and the sooner we start developing the alternative, renewable sources, the less

painful the transition will be. And just how painful that is going to be is outlined in the fifth chapter. Here Heinberg outlines the implications in a variety of contexts, including the overall economy, transportation, heating and cooking, public health, the environment, information storage and so forth. It does not make for comfortable reading.

And neither does the final chapter with his suggestions on managing the collapse, although those of an anarchist persuasion will find much that is compatible with some forms of anarchism here. What Heinberg advocates is pretty much what many anarchists have put forward: local self-sufficiency, community oriented, low (and equal) consumption, local transport, handicrafts and sustainable organic agriculture. In technological terms, pretty much back to the 1600's in Europe, but sadly we won't be able to have so many people as we have now. Heinberg estimates that 2 billion humans is the most the planet can manage.

However he suggests that if all couples only have 1.5 children on average for the next 100 years we could arrive at this figure, without state intervention.

Sadly one suspects that along the way many will be killed through breakdowns in public health, starvation, civil and international resource wars, disease and so forth (I'm not advocating that, merely saying that's what I think is most likely.)

The book is well researched, clearly argued, well presented and documented. It is, of course, a tad ironic that a book that foresees the end of the Internet and electronic storage media itself references so many on-line sources of information (download and print them out whilst you can!). As far as I can see, the basic argument is sound; the only question relates to exactly when we reach the "peak" of oil production. Heinberg quotes figures suggesting that that global oil production peak is most likely to fall within the window of 2006 to 2015 (see p. 119). More recently in an e-mail in response to my original review he states: "These days (18 months after the book was finished and off to the printer) I'm more likely to say 2006 to 2010."

After that it's downhill all the way. That remains to be seen, but it matters little if it's 5 or 10 years either way. The time when this issue should have been

properly addressed was when people first became aware of it in the 1970's.

Instead a combination of political and economic forces has swept the issue under an increasingly threadbare carpet. Quite correctly, in my opinion, Heinberg puts forward a wide range of ways in which individuals and (in particular) communities can begin the move to a post-industrial society. The problem is that most of them are really only suited to rural communities (and proper "communities" at that, not just whoever lives in the countryside.) How people in the big cities are going to cope begins to look increasingly grim. One small factor I think Heinberg should have emphasised; we need to start breeding more working horses (i.e. horses capable of more work than just providing pubescent girls with some fun at weekends) though we also need to remember that one reason people welcomed the coming of the car was, it meant an end to the mountains of horse manure in the town and city. I suspect people had better start getting used to it - better still there's going to be an urgent use for it when the inorganic fertilizers run out!

If you hadn't given the subject much thought this book should provide your wake-up call. And even if the theme is already understood, most readers will gain additional insight by reading this book. Thoroughly recommended.

Richard Alexander

SAHARASIA by Dr. James DeMeo

Radicals have long sought the root cause of the development of the state and classes. Decades before any anthropological or archeological evidence was available, Karl Marx applied his economic interpretation of human development to the problem. According to marxist theory, early humans lived in scarcity. Since there was no economic surplus, state and classes could not exist. When agriculture developed, an economic surplus was available and this was grabbed by a small group. From this act of appropriation

came class division and the state; the latter needed to protect the expropriators from the expropriated. Archeological evidence, however, shows primitive man did not generally live in scarcity, hence the economic factor could not be the determining one. Contemporary anthropologists like Pierre Clastres have inverted Marx's order, hierarchy and authority coming first, then the state and economic classes.

How did hierarchy and authority come to be? Social scientists have speculated about a process of "slow, social evolution." Power and authority were gradually built up through the growing status of elders, chiefs and village "Big Men", reaching a crucial break-through point during the high Neolithic, when a relatively large population was concentrated in towns and villages and supposedly needed central direction. The trouble with this theory is there is little evidence for it. What anthropological evidence we do have reveals those elders, chiefs and 'Big Men', to have little, if any, coercive power. But there had to be some explanation for hierarchical authority and social evolution filled the bill.

In the 1980's the discoveries of the eminent archeologist Marija Gimbutas began to challenge the theory of slow social evolution. Highly advanced Neolithic and Chalcolithic (copper-using) civilizations were unearthed in Eastern Europe and Turkey. These 'Old European' cultures had towns of up to 10,000 inhabitants, yet no evidence of class division and state formation.⁽¹⁾ When authoritarianism did arrive, it was brought in at sword point by invaders from the steppes, who destroyed the old egalitarian societies and replaced them with the patriarchal, warlike, dominator system that we have come to know only too well. Nonetheless, as Murray Bookchin points out, "the emphasis of certain eco-feminists... on this 'take-over' and 'invasion theory' simply creates another unresolved mystery: how did ... the emergence of patriarchy occur in the pastoral societies that did the invading?"⁽²⁾

Seemingly, we are back at square one. But perhaps not for long. SAHARSIA by Dr. James DeMeo, claims that state-building, hierarchical and authoritarian cultures had their root cause in climatic changes. Eight thousand years ago, the global climate was cool and moist. What

is now the Sahara Desert, for example, was a series of shallow inland seas teeming with wildlife. (Remember the Cave of the Swimmers in the film *The English Patient*?) Up till then all societies were 'partnership societies' - egalitarian and without coercive power hierarchies. Beginning about 5000 BC, the Sahara, Middle East and Steppe areas of Eurasia, which DeMeo names 'Saharasia', underwent rapid, severe and lasting desertification.

The resulting famine and conflict over scarce resources created a psychological cultural shock engendering virtually a mass psychosis. This psychological effect gave rise to a violent and extremely negative world-view, which became the ideological root of patriarchal-authoritarian culture. Important aspects of this culture included the dictatorial warrior-king, a cruel, demanding sky god with a priesthood to match, a class of slaves and a subordinate role for women and children. About 3000-4000 BC, driven by a new wave of desertification, the people of Saharasia invaded the neighboring egalitarian societies and imposed their authoritarian system upon them. Then, over the centuries, through

ideological and military imperialism, these dominator cultures imposed themselves upon the rest of the world.

DeMeo also examines cultures other than the 'Saharasian' and explores their relationship to the process of desertification. He finds a remarkable similarity between what happened in 'Saharasia' and these other regions. When areas became desert, within time, groups emerged which then conquered other peoples, imposing patriarchy, a state and a brutal, sacrificial religion upon them. Deserts in existence prior to human habitation, such as the Australian Desert and the Kalahari, did not have this negative influence upon the humans that migrated there. (The Kung of the Kalahari and the Australian Aborigines are not noted for authoritarianism or sexual repression). It seems this process only occurs when an existing population is subjected to the shock of desertification.

SAHARASIA also involves a massive and exhausting (and first time) comparison of hundreds of cultures for their degree of sexual and gender repression, absence or presence of war, violent religious beliefs, polygamy, genital mutilation, suttee and human

sacrifice. As anarchists have always thought, there is a correlation between statist-patriarchal, sexually repressive societies and war, human sacrifice and the other horrors listed.

DeMeo's immense work (it took about 10 years of research and is 454 pages, 8½ by 11) is of the greatest importance for those of us who love liberty and believe authoritarianism is not an innate or inevitable condition. This book is a real break-through and I would strongly advise readers of TOTAL LIBERTY to obtain a copy. SAHARASIA can be ordered for \$34.00 US from OBRL Box 1148 Ashland OR 97520 USA, or www.natural-energy-works.com

Larry Gambone

(1) Some readers might wonder how an archeologist arrives at such a conclusion about something as social as class and the state. There is no great mystery here. Take graves and grave goods for example. An egalitarian society will show little difference in grave size and contents. So too, differentiation in house size and the existence, or non-existence, of palaces and temple complexes.

(2) Murray Bookchin, REMAKING SOCIETY, Page 76

STATE YOUR TERMS!

On the mis-use of language to convey subtle collectivist messages.

A well-known lover of freedom, writing about the causes of the atrocities of September 11, 2001, used a phrase which jarred on me: "Our meddling in Middle East politics". What he really meant was "The US government's meddling in Middle East politics". My friend, living in the USA, had found it natural to use "we" or "our" to refer to the US government. The effect was to give the reader a very subtle statist message, namely that everyone, particularly US citizens, and including my friend, must accept a portion of the responsibility for the US government's meddling in Middle East politics.

This small, unintentional slip showed one way in which language can be used to convey subtle collectivist, anti-

individual and anti-freedom messages. Those that hate individual freedom - I will call them lovers of tyranny - are masters of this particular art. I decided to write this paper to alert lovers of freedom to (or to remind them of) a few of these deceptions, and to suggest how they might try to avoid these traps in their own writing.

WE

The misuse of the word "we", and its derivatives "us" or "our", is very common. Many people, when they beat their breasts and say "we must do something about this", mean "I want the government to force people to do something about this". But, by using the word "we", they are fraudulently claiming to speak for large numbers of

people, many of whom if asked might well disagree entirely with what they say. The key to detecting the fraud in this case is the simple one of asking: "Who's we?" If a speaker or writer uses "we" in a way which is not clearly defined, you may perhaps have caught a lover of tyranny in the act.

Another misuse of "we", often perpetrated by religionists and environmentalists, is to project guilt onto the entire human race. "Ever since we were given the Ten Commandments, we've ignored them", moan religious fanatics. "We are polluting the atmosphere - We can't go on like this", scream enviros. The key here is to apply their own arguments to themselves. Have they, as individuals, ignored - for example - "Thou shalt not steal?" Are

they polluting the atmosphere - the mental environment - with lies, and falsely trying to make people feel guilty? There are two lessons to be learned. First, never accept any guilt for anything other than your own actions, or the actions of someone under your direct control. Second, if those that use "we" in this way genuinely believe what they are saying, they are damning themselves out of their own mouths.

Related to both these misuses is the making of statements which bundle people together according to nationality, or according to some characteristic beyond their control, such as race. The motivation for this collectivist "bundling" is often to rouse emotions, either for or against those people. One should be suspicious of any sweeping statement, either positive or negative, about (to give two examples) "Americans" or "blacks". Apart from the difficulty of determining just who exactly is "American" or who exactly is "black" (and who not), such blanket statements obscure the fact that human beings are all different.

PERSONALISING PLACES

Another misuse of language is the personalisation of nationstates, as in, "France wants X extradited" - or, when already speaking of France, "She wants X extradited". In reality, a nation-state is not a person, and should never be given the pronoun "he" or "she". The example above would have been better expressed as, "French leaders want X extradited", or even as "French government officials have said they want X extradited". France, indeed, is a piece of land; France cannot want anything (except, possibly, rain).

There is often similar misuse of the names of cities, particularly capital cities. For example, "London says such-and-such" or "Washington has confirmed so-and-so". Even buildings are sometimes personalised: "The White House wants to tell the American public that ..."

In English, capital letters are not normally used for nouns, except for proper names and for the first word of a sentence. However, it is conventional to use capital letters for the names of establishment institutions and personages. Examples of such words are government, king, parliament, president, state, church, pope. To dignify these words with capital letters - Government,

President, State, Church, for example - gives to the reader an almost subliminal message of power, respect and even reverence. But, as historians and lovers of freedom know, many of these organisations and individuals have shown, by their actions, that they are not worthy of any such respect or reverence.

PUBLIC

Those that hate freedom - statists, collectivists, lovers of tyranny, call them what you will - have two words, which they very often pervert. These are "public" and "people".

The adjective "public", in its true meaning, means "for the benefit of all". No less a thinker than John Locke, in his First Treatise of Government, defined the "public good", which must be the objective of every government, as "the good of every particular member of that society, as far as by common rules, it can be provided for". (In other words, if even one non-criminal individual in a society suffers net harm from government, that government is not acting according to the public good, and so is not doing its job).

There are many common uses of the word "public", in which it has its true meaning of "for the benefit of all" or "open to all". For example: public footpath, public house, public transport. But statists often pervert this word into a meaning more like "of or pertaining to the state". For example: public purse, public sector, public works. And when any politician talks about something being in the "public interest", you can be sure that this is no more than an excuse to "justify" the particular policies of that politician.

PEOPLE

The word "people", in English, has two quite different meanings. People (plural) are human beings. The word "people" (singular) is used to mean a nation, or a sub-group within a nation. And statists often use "people" (singular), when they want those receiving the message to think that they are talking about people (plural). The key here is to ask, if you replace the word "people" by "persons", does the sentence still mean the same? For example, when Abraham Lincoln spoke of "government of the people, by the people, for the people", did he mean a society in which individual human

beings run their own lives, or did he mean something else?

DEMOCRACY

Which leads to one of the most misunderstood words of all, "democracy". Western politicians, especially US presidents love to extol how wonderful democracy is, how no social or political system could possibly be better. This is hardly surprising, as democracy is, after all, the system through which they obtained power. This paper is not the place to discuss in detail why democracy today doesn't work, and why so many individuals feel disempowered. Here, I will only address one reason why democracy fails; namely, that the word democracy doesn't mean what people have been led to believe it does.

Democracy, says conventional wisdom, means "power to the people" - power to you and me. But this is not so. The word consists of two parts, both from the ancient Greek. The "cracy" bit, as with other "-cracy" words like aristocracy, means power. (In modern Greek, the root word "kratos" has come to mean "the state") The "demo" bit is more interesting. Democracy means power to the "demos". "Demos" means people. But as you will have already seen if you know Greek, the word "demos" is singular. Indeed, this very word "demos", in modern Greek, has taken on the meaning of "municipality" or "borough". So, the real meaning of democracy has nothing to do with empowering individuals. It really means something more like "power to the municipality", or even "power to the state!"

WAR

Lastly, lovers of tyranny often show themselves for what they are, by their liking for military expressions. Politicians fight election campaigns, from which they want victory. And the word they like best of all is "war". War on poverty, war on waste, war on litter, war on drugs, war on crime, war on terrorism - their list is long, and their wars are never-ending. There are on planet Earth two conflicting world-views. The world-view of the lovers of freedom is, in essence, that human beings are individuals, naturally good, peaceful, productive and constructive. That human beings must take full responsibility for their own voluntary actions, but are not guilty for anything

done by others outside their control. That all laws should ultimately boil down to just one kernel, namely, respect for others' rights. That all the problems in the world are due to a minority of "bad apples" or, as John Locke called them, "noxious creatures", and to the rot caused in others by their words and their activities. That good human beings, left to themselves, will create order out of chaos, and so make the planet a fit place for the human race to live.

The world-view of the lovers of tyranny, on the other hand, is that human beings are naturally bad, warlike and no more than cogs in a social machine. That all humans must accept a collective responsibility or guilt, which extends even to things outside their control. That, left to themselves, humans will destroy the planet. That humans must be controlled and regulated, and order imposed on them, either through force or through manipulating their beliefs. (And, that they themselves, the lovers of tyranny, are best equipped to do this controlling and regulating!)

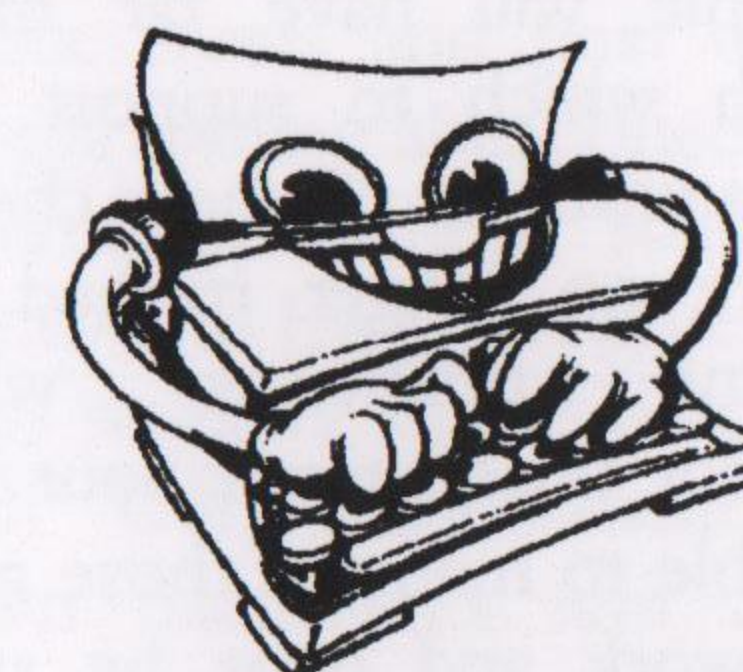
Each individual shows his or her world-view in the way he or she uses language. And we (that is to say, lovers of freedom) are too prone to slip into our rivals' way of speaking and writing. When we use "we", for example, we should try to make it clear just who we mean. We should be alert to other misuses of "we", for example to represent statist institutions, or to project false guilt. We should avoid implying that individuals must accept responsibility for things outside their control, particularly for actions carried out by politicians. We should try to avoid "bundling" people together into groups and making sweeping statements about them. We should reject the personalization of nation-states or cities. We should not dignify with capital letters personages or institutions that do not deserve them. We should not misuse words like "people" and "public", and we should avoid warlike metaphors, such as calling our rivals "the enemy". In short, we need to "state" our case in our terms, not our rivals'.

We lovers of freedom are usually strong on facts and logic. But facts and logic alone will never persuade those very many people, whose minds have been poisoned towards our rivals' world-view by their long-term, persistent propaganda. We will never roll back the power of the state, still less heal the

damage done by nation-states and politicians, unless we strive to make our use of language reinforce, rather than dilute, our uncompromisingly individual, peaceful and optimistic message.

Neil Lock

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LETTERS

Dear Total Liberty

I think that Anarchists should refuse to be associated exclusively with one particular economic system. These economic ideas such as individualism, mutualism and communism appear in certain places and certain times. To try to implement one system exclusively at the cost of the others would seem to me to be mistaken. I strongly suspect a future, at least more libertarian society, would still have lots of different economic systems in it. It would be pluralistic. People would have developed economic ideas suitable to their circumstances. It is in this area that Anarchists could try and put their efforts rather than name-calling other Anarchists with different ideas.

John Griffin is right to raise the issue about welfare (in TL4 Number 2). It is very easy to sloganise without coming to grips with the issue. If money is abolished and I can think of good reasons why it would not be, then there remains the issue of how to support those who cannot work. Even now there is the issue of an ageing population, with a higher proportion of people at retirement age. How would Anarchists propose to deal with this?

D.Dane

Dear Editor

In his letter in the last issue of TL criticizing my article *Individualism and Inequality*, John Griffin complained that I gave inadequate attention to welfare in that piece. However, my intention in this

article was not to cover every issue involved in social and economic change, but simply to give a broad overview of some of the differences I see between anarchists who favor conflicting models of economic relations in a future free society.

It is apparent from John's letter, as well as recent articles by him in both TL and *Any Time Now*, that John believes welfare is the most important issue for anarchists to discuss. I, on the other hand, think it is just one of the many topics anarchists need to address in our writings and activities. John claims I "dismiss...the problem with reference to...voluntary agencies," but a detailed exposition of an individualist or mutualist method for providing assistance to disabled or otherwise needy people was outside the scope of this article. I have, however, addressed this issue at some length in two broadsides, *Individualism, Anarchy, and Compassion* (1996) and *The Poverty of the Welfare State* (1998), both of which are available on the Bad Press website: world.std.com/~bbrigade. While John has made it clear in his articles, as well as in private correspondence, that he disagrees with my ideas about how anarchists could provide charity and mutual aid, he is well aware I have dealt with this subject in my writings elsewhere. But for him, any proposal different from the one he advocates is necessarily either unworkable or inadequate.

John believes that "workable solutions" to the problems presented by welfare are "likely to conflict with voluntarist preferences." That is only because he lacks the imagination to see that free people could, in fact, help out others in difficulty without being forced to. In his ATN and TL articles he says he believes that anarchists should maintain a compulsory system of "contributions"—or, in more honest language, taxes. How is this an anarchist system of providing assistance, if it is based on the theft of what other workers have produced? If John does not really believe that anarchists can be trusted to provide mutual aid voluntarily, thereby necessitating a system of coercive funding incompatible with anarchy, why does he continue to call himself a libertarian? No one is entitled to what is produced by others. That goes for governments, capitalists, or others, including poor people, who are either

unable or unwilling to work. Coercion and theft have no place in a libertarian society, whatever the motivation of those putting their hands into the pockets of working people. The fact that those who are stealing from others claim they are doing so in the interests of the community, or society, or the poor and underprivileged does not make it right. And besides being wrong, funding charity with stolen goods is unnecessary. Even now, when all people who work are forced to subsidize welfare systems, those same people often go on to contribute *voluntarily* to organisations dedicated to helping others through difficult times.

I believe that free people are capable of taking care of themselves and others quite well, without being directed by others who think they know better how we should use the wealth we produce. The examples of voluntarily provided mutual aid for the sick and disabled which I have written of elsewhere are just that – examples; they serve to demonstrate that people can organise voluntary associations to provide for themselves and their loved ones, friends, co-workers, etc. I concede that the friendly societies and other mutual aid organisations of the past were imperfect and did not provide the level of benefit that modern welfare states do. But in the era in which they were most common, wages, health care, and household utilities were also not up to modern levels. The world was different before the welfare state in many ways, and the fact that cooperative groups have been less than perfect does not mean the principle on which they were organised is either invalid or unworkable. Just as the friendlies of the past operated in an environment where all the conditions of life for working and poor people were far inferior to those of modern Europe and north America, free associations in a future libertarian society would function in a wholly new environment. John fears that “individualist recipes will never match current state benefits,” but some of us believe that aspiring simply to mimic the practices of the welfare state is not the goal for anarchists to pursue. If regular people were not robbed of a portion of what they produce by capitalists and the state, if housing and land were not made artificially expensive by government-protected monopolies in the land, if health care were not priced out of reach

of so many by rules, regulations, and professional monopolies, the number of people in need of assistance would be much smaller than at present. Those of us who look to voluntary efforts as a way to meet people's wants and needs do not envision a society where just charity or insurance schemes are different. We believe that removing the state and its destructive effect on working people's ability to produce and utilize wealth will change everything. Working people will have far more resources with which to support the charitable organisations of their choice when they are no longer robbed by capitalists and politicians, while opportunities for productive labour will become available to many of those now kept out of work and poor by state intervention in economic affairs. And if prosperous working people in a free society cannot be trusted to voluntarily provide for sick and disabled people, the anarchist project is doomed to failure. John is correct that my views on welfare and voluntary alternatives are rejected by many, anarchists as well as non-anarchists. But the fact that claimants and their supporters may not like the ideas I have proposed about welfare does not invalidate them. Many people, including John, are, of course, hesitant to give up what they see as a sure thing and gamble on something new. But that is no reason for anarchists to be shy when talking about alternatives to coercive systems. I'm sure that police, schoolteachers, employees of government hospitals, and bureaucrats of all sorts are equally unhappy with my proposals to abolish the state. But if I give up on promoting non-state solutions to people's problems, I stop being a libertarian. It is obvious that John doesn't really believe that a completely voluntary society is attainable, because it cannot deliver the goods to people used to living conditions in the liberal democracies. He may well be right. Way too many people, including some libertarians, do not value freedom enough to be willing to give up the security they currently enjoy for a risky future where they would have to trust in the good intentions and enlightened self-interest of other people. The only way that will ever change is if people come to realize that the benefits they receive from the welfare state come at the cost of their own freedom of action. And unless they come to believe

their liberty is something worth taking risks for, governments and force are here to stay.

I am an anarchist. To me that means promoting social arrangements that are free, are voluntary, and facilitate prosperity and fairness. Voluntarism is not merely a “preference,” but is essential to my view of what a free world would look like. Until people start to believe in the importance of individual liberty, free economic exchange, and voluntary mutual aid, there will be no movement toward a libertarian society. While I harbor no illusion that an anarchist society will come about anytime soon, we have no chance of ever getting there unless anarchists make the moral case for liberty and against compulsion.

Joe Peacott

Dear Editor

Thank you for Total Liberty Vol.4 No.2. I've enclosed \$20.00 to renew my subscription.

Congratulations on keeping your magazine going and getting another issue out. As your editorial points out, anything worthwhile on Anarchism is almost hidden. In the U.S. it is hidden in the shadow of the magazine *Anarchy*: a journal of desire armed. Even the title alludes to violence, and it's all you will ever find on the topic in almost all U.S. bookstores that are likely to carry something like this. (Plus, it seems that people suspect it is funded by the government.) Either way it's writing is crap.

I liked Fred Woodworth's article. I saw it in *The Match*! but I always like to re-read his stuff.

I also liked “Return the Streets” as an example of how governments come in and fix what's not broken and how communities can manage themselves without the help of outsiders and mayors. Our mayor is putting speed humps everywhere, foot tall mounds, three to the city block, and trying to ruin every car in the city.

Sincerely
Paul Johnson
Chicago
US

Freedom Editorial Collective
12 July, 2004

Comrades,

A *Freedom* contributor emailed me the other night to tell me that your editorial column (Vol.4, No.2) had some rather unfavourable comments about our paper.

I must say having read it I'm not entirely sure what your criticisms are. You talk about the sad fact that, while most people would agree with most anarchist arguments, they will not when they are revealed as such. Are you blaming *Freedom* for this? Or saying that we do not address this?

We make a concerted effort to bring discussion of anarchism down from intellectual ivory-towers to the level of everyday life - after all, we should not be a talking shop but a living movement of people fighting for better, joyful existences. Having said that, we also wish to develop and provide a well thought-out, intelligent and detailed critique of the problems of authoritarian society. As such we publish a mixture of articles which, contrary to your claims, do “report ... successful and practical projects on the ground”. Looking over our most recent issue I can see that in this vein we have included articles detailing London residents combating mobile phone masts and post office closures, people turning abandoned buildings into community centres, solidarity between British and Iraqi firefighters, accounts of mass workers' opposition to the second Gulf War, environmentalists shutting down Sainsbury's and South Korean workers stopping troop movements. And surely this kind of thing - ordinary people taking direct action to improve our lives and communities - is what anarchism is really all about?

Or should we just re-print stuff from last year's *Match* and tell people to petition their council to dissolve itself?

Best regards,
John S

For *Freedom*, editorial collective

Editorial Reply

If John S. has read the editorial from the last edition of TL I am truly surprised that he does not understand my critique of *Freedom*. The piece in question did not say *Freedom* were responsible for

the fact that people often accept and agree with Anarchist ideas until the word Anarchist is attached to them. The editorial said, at the risk of repeating myself that *Freedom* has abandoned the broader church of Anarchist ideas for a narrow class struggle based version of Anarchism. It also said that there is too little coverage of practical projects. And despite John S.'s reference to *Freedom* now featuring ... “articles detailing London residents combating mobile phone masts and post office closures, people turning abandoned buildings into community centres, solidarity between British and Iraqi firefighters, accounts of mass workers' opposition to the second Gulf War, environmentalists shutting down Sainsbury's and South Korean workers stopping troop movements. And surely this kind of thing - ordinary people taking direct action to improve our lives and communities - is what anarchism is really all about?” ... These were not the sort of practical projects I had in mind. That they are community politics level campaigns is not in doubt, but there is nothing particularly *Anarchist* about them. Liberal, Green, Labour and even Tory Party local constituency members get involved in such, and there is a place for such campaigns to maintain the quality of life in communities and workplaces. But Anarchists need to show *Anarchist alternatives in existence on the ground*, and by this I mean successful and long lived Worker Co-ops, small family businesses, self employment, Food Co-ops, LETS schemes, Housing Co-ops, Self Build Housing projects etc. *Freedom* carries very little reportage of these sorts of project these days. I read far more of such ‘anarchist’ activity in the likes of *Resurgence*, *Positive News* and other Green and Environmental movement journals than in *Freedom*. As for Work and trade disputes these are necessarily about wages and working conditions, opposing shop and factory closures and redundancies. But they are not about establishing an Anarchist society, or building the alternative organisations and features of a Free Society. The whole language and jargon of *Freedom* articles these days, is to be seen in John's letter i.e. constant references to workers, struggle, fighting, dispute, this is the language of a *workerist* vision. We are not all workers in the classical sense, most people do not look upon themselves as being part of the ‘working class’. Such

language is self marginalising and self defeating.

John S. says *Freedom* is making ... “a concerted effort to bring discussion of anarchism down from intellectual ivory-towers to the level of everyday life - after all, we should not be a talking shop but a living movement of people fighting for better, joyful existences” ... Well there is little joyful about *Freedom* these days in my view, and it shows few signs to being open to new ideas. And as for wanting to ... “develop and provide a well thought-out, intelligent and detailed critique of the problems of authoritarian society”. This is not possible when the critique so developed is workerist, class struggle based and ignores or rejects out of hand the other traditions within the Anarchist tradition ie the Mutualists, The Individualists and even the Greens. John says *Freedom* now features a ... “mixture of articles which contrary to your claims do report ... successful and practical projects on the ground”. Well a mixture of topics perhaps, but not a broad variety of views or a real debate and discussion. At Height Gate last year Toby Crowe, one of the then *Freedom* editorial group said the circulation of *Freedom* was around 800 copies. Given the current viewpoints expressed and the sort of articles carried in *Freedom* I am not surprised. To reach ordinary people Anarchist papers need to re-evaluate Anarchist ideas and to hold an open debate. I am afraid the regular dose of 19th Century Marxist and Class Struggle dominated viewpoints to be seen in *Freedom* will *repel* not *attract* people to anarchism. *Freedom* has lost its way.

Jonathan Simcock
Editor Total Liberty

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.