

Influenced by Social Ecology

# Contributors

We have a rotating group of contributors who focus on many different subjects. If you are interested in contributing, email Ryan Salisbury at [rsalisbury@transferics.com](mailto:rsalisbury@transferics.com).



**Little -Blood** is an abhorrent and vile disease that has infected the biological spaceship referred to by other homo-sapiens as Alfie Killick. Symptoms include artistic ambition, a love of the avant-garde and an unwholesome obsession with the destruction of the status quo. You can track the progress of this dangerous threat to our normality here:

[little-blood.tumblr.com](http://little-blood.tumblr.com)  
[facebook.com/AlfieKillickArt](http://facebook.com/AlfieKillickArt)  
[little-blood.bandcamp.com](http://little-blood.bandcamp.com)

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**Janet Biehl** was involved with popularizing and developing the theory and politics of social ecology. From 1987 to 2000 she published and, together with Murray Bookchin, co-edited *Left Green Perspectives*. She has written on libertarian municipalism and a range of critiques of deep ecology, ecofeminism, and far-right tendencies.

**Heiwa jima Shizuo** 彼はここで、他の作家の一人であってもよいです。幸いなことに、あなたは日本語を読んでいない、おそらく外人！

# Table of Contents



## Features

Glossary	3
Drop of Knowledge: Sustainable Solar Power	10
5 Things That Never Made Anyone a Billionaire	11

## Articles

Reflections on The Framework, Form, Content & Means of Murray Bookchin's Political Views	4
Better Off	12
The Ramp Strategy	19
Unwanted Information and Depressing Truths: A Critique of Capitalism	21
Municipalization of the Economy	26
Hamburg conference features scholars & Kurdish activists	29
Invisible Hands	31

## Glossary

**Pedantic** If you've spent hours talking to brainwashed people, you are probably intimately familiar with the sexy art of pedantic wordplay: Involves playing erotically with just the tip of details, hovering around making a point, and stroking one's ego, and after many hours, you explode.

**Universal Basic Expropriation (UBE)** A scheme whereby each citizen of a nation realizes his and her basic right to man's common heritage and takes back the implements for their own subsistence. Most effective in the absence of government and the presence of fire.

**Farmer John Fallacy** According to right-wing "libertarians", reality appears to be composed of two men swapping apples for chickens, or oranges for shoes, and all sociality can be reduced to this situation.

**Pervasive Market Fallacy** According to "anarcho"-capitalists, every possible action that a living or nonliving thing can take is actually an exchange. Therefore, economics is actually sociology, psychology, sexuality, science, art, math, and culture. Isn't economics versatile?

**White Wing** See, the reason that wealth is mostly concentrated in the hands of white men is simply because they worked harder and aren't criminals. Society can't be "racist", you silly liberal!

**Closeability** The ability for a community to be closed off from external inputs; compare to Autarky which is the *state* of being closed off from external inputs. Closeability provides resilience without independence, because dependence on others is a cause for sociality.

## Right-wing Glossary

**Free market** The existence of freedom; any time when two people are not punching or murdering.

**Freedom** The existence of free markets; any time when two people are not stealing or raping.

**Class Warfare** When the poor try to take from the rich; theft and a violation of our most basic right.

**Capitalism** When the rich successfully take from the poor; free and voluntary association.

**Socialism** Not capitalism; a centrally planned system run by a dictator, responsible for genocide on an unprecedented scale, mass starvation, ecological destruction, and lack of freedom at work.

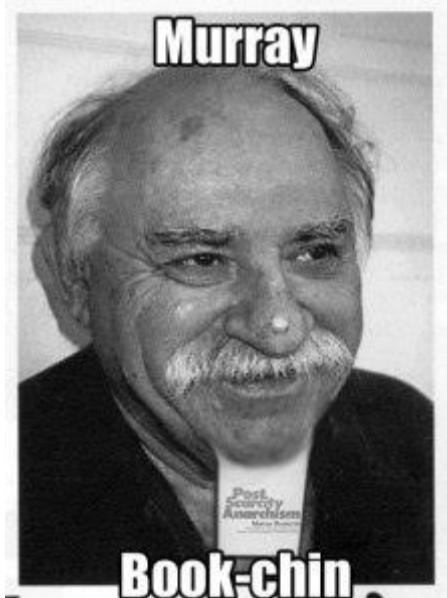
**Democracy** Your rights end where my nose begins, and democracy is the deployment of armed force in order to coerce me into doing things like not enslaving people, not polluting the Earth far beyond my lifetime, and other things which are perfectly ethical because of property rights.

**Property** Potentially, anything in the universe, e.g. air, ideas, meteors. Also your body, but you can't sell it, and don't ask me about abortion or I'll have to change the subject. Dibs for people over 10.

**Individual Freedom** Literally, freedom for individuals. Not "individuals" as in all individuals, "individuals" as in some individuals; freedom from being shot, but not from being starved.

# Reflections on The Framework, Form, Content & Means of Murray Bookchin's Political Views

by Hagbard Celine33



*The book **Post-Scarcity Anarchism** by Murray Bookchin outlines an adaptation of anarchism to a new technological context. It has been over four decades since the essay **Towards Liberatory Technology** was written, meaning our potential for liberatory technology is far greater than it was when he wrote that essay in 1968. Bookchin's train of thought can be summed up by gift/need/ability-based decentralism/confederalism, with participatory democratic processes within rules prohibiting authoritarianism, social ecology, liberatory technology, and the means and ends of libertarian municipalism.*

## Framework

**Social ecology** is a framework for viewing human and ecological relationships that describes a dialogue between societies and ecosystems (or as Bookchin called them, “eco-communities”). Social ecology proposes the notion that our ecological problems are social problems in disguise:

*What literally defines social ecology as “social” is its recognition of the often overlooked fact that nearly all our present ecological problems arise from deep-seated social problems. Conversely, present ecological problems cannot be clearly understood, much less resolved, without resolutely dealing with problems within society (Bookchin).*

By changing how we relate to each other, we can change how we relate to our environment. Market principles use profit as a mechanism to ration finite resources. Market principles will help the ecosystem to the degree that helping the ecosystem will maximize profit, and they will harm the ecosystem to the degree that harming the ecosystem maximizes profit. This translates to the transformation of life into non-life to the degree that it maximizes power and profit. The market creates an economic hierarchy. The best way to maximize profit is through authoritarian relations—privately owning the means of production and using the state as a mechanism to maximize profit and enforce the private ownership of that which others use. A huge source of ecological problems is also ignorance of available technology, available resources, and our interdependence to each other and our ecosystems, of alternative social systems, etc. Ignorance may never disappear, but we can certainly minimize ignorance in regards to certain areas of knowledge (and by extension minimize harm done to each other and to our environment). Our eco-communities shape our relationships to each other, and our relations to each other shape our eco-

communities, which then shapes our relations to each other and so on and so forth in a seemingly never-ending dialogue between society and the environment(similar to the dialogue between individuals and collectives).

This framework for viewing the human and ecological problems, leads to the conclusion that we need non authoritarian social forms (or forms of freedom) in order to care for the wellbeing of humans and the ecosystems we are dependent upon. The market and the state turn the organic into the non-organic to the extent that power and profit are maximized. This inevitably has ecocidal consequences. To get rid of ecocide, we must get rid of the market, the state, patriarchy, white supremacy, and minimize behavioral authoritarianism.

## **Form**

Anarcho-communism advocates using decentralization of power as a mechanism to create a stateless, classless, moneyless society without authoritarian systems or behaviors. In such a system, resources would be distributed according to abilities and needs. Anarcho-communists advocate personal property, anti-authoritarian collective property, and common property as well as gift—from individual to collective, collective to individual, individual to individual, and collective to collective—as a mechanism for distributing resources. Anarcho-communism provides us with an excellent analysis of the forms that we should NOT have, and aspects of the forms that we should have. Even if we had the most free forms possible, the content within such forms can theoretically be antithetical to the aims of anarcho-communism. The content we ought to have should to be based on liberatory technology in the aims of achieving a post scarcity society.

The form of institutions that Bookchin advocated were municipal assemblies based on participatory democracy within free associations (freedom of, from and within associations checked and balanced by freedom of, from, and within associations of others). Individuals would retain rights to leave associations, without harming free association of others, and stay within an association while disagreeing and opting out of participating in that which they disagree with. Bookchin did not think we could magically abolish power. Instead, Bookchin advocated decentralization of decision making power and confederations, which are associations of free associations. Bookchin was for governance without statecraft: “Confederalism is [...] a way of perpetuating the interdependence that should exist among communities and regions — indeed, it is a way of democratizing that interdependence without surrendering the principle of local control (Bookchin).” Decentralization of decision making power was necessary but not sufficient for Bookchin. For many associations to associate without authoritarian relations, confederalism needs to be implemented.

Bookchin called his views towards the end of his life communalism. Bookchin said “As an ideology, Communalism draws on the best of the older Left ideologies—Marxism and anarchism, more properly the libertarian socialist tradition—while offering a wider and more relevant scope for our time. From Marxism, it draws the basic project of formulating a rationally systematic and coherent socialism that integrates philosophy, history, economics, and politics. Avowedly dialectical, it attempts to infuse theory with practice. From anarchism, it draws its commitment to anti-statism and confederalism, as well as its recognition that hierarchy is a basic problem that can be overcome only by a libertarian socialist society.” Bookchin felt even anarcho communism, in describing that it was against the state and for communism, did not fully express what kinds of organization/rules/institutions would exist.

Bookchin realized towards the end of his life that anarchism, although defining what it was *against* (private property and the state and in its more mature forms hierarchy in any form), did not sufficiently state what it was *for*. For Bookchin, even anarcho-communists were too vague in regards to the forms of freedom they advocated for. Bookchin was insistent upon participatory democracy as a mechanism during and after we transition to a society without states and markets. Bookchin advocated a democracy that is direct, inclusive, and based equality of decision making power. Bookchin advocated for a constitution with non-hierarchical obligations and rights, and deliberative participatory democracy within the limits of the constitution. Bookchin advocated majority preference within a set of rules that prohibited authoritarian relations. Bookchin also advocated for the rights of minority preferences to dissent and do what they want within the rules of society. In this sense majority and minority preferences would be respected, the individual and society harmonizing as much as possible due to these boundaries, creating social freedom. When different preferences are compatible they can all occur, and when there is an incompatibility between various preferences, the majority decides. The content of liberatory technology minimizes such incompatibilities between various preferences.

## Content

Liberatory technology is the art of applied science with an empathetic, anti-authoritarian ethic. Liberatory technology is technology used in an ethical way to maximize well-being of all. Logic without compassion can lead to more efficient ways to perform slavery, war, and genocide. Compassion without logic can lead to people supporting the market and the state by being ignorant of what they support. Logic is necessary but insufficient for maximizing the wellbeing of all. Compassion is necessary but insufficient for maximizing the wellbeing of all. The chapter “Towards a Liberatory Technology” is one of the most important 20<sup>th</sup> century anarchist essays as far as ideals are concerned. Bookchin adapts the dreams and aspirations of anarchism to a post 1960s technological context. This technological context includes the automation of labor, geothermal, solar, wind, wave, tidal energy, thousands of resources through hemp (including plastics, paper, and much more), aeroponic gardening, vertical gardening, permaculture, rain water collection and purification systems, etc. However, Bookchin is neither a technophile nor a technophobe. Bookchin recognizes the capabilities for authoritarian and liberatory technology, and by extension how we can be in harmony with the global ecosystem or how we can destroy it. If Bookchin was a pure technophile, like some of his critics claim he was, there would have been no need to add the term “liberatory” to technology, for it would be superfluous. Liberatory technology implies a logic guided by an empathetic, anti-authoritarian rudder.

*It is easy to foresee a time, by no means remote, when a rationally organized economy could automatically manufacture small “packaged” factories without human labor; parts could be produced with so little effort that most maintenance tasks would be reduced to the simple act of removing a defective unit from a machine and replacing it by another—a job no more difficult than pulling out and putting in a tray. Machines would make and repair most of the machines required to maintain such a highly industrialized economy. Such a technology, oriented entirely toward human needs and freed from all consideration of profit and loss, would eliminate the pain of want and toil—the penalty, inflicted in the form of denial, suffering and inhumanity, exacted by a society based on scarcity and labor (Bookchin).*

“Necessary” liberatory technology is the liberatory technology necessary to maintain the forms of freedom. The surplus liberatory technology is liberatory technology that isn’t necessary for anti-

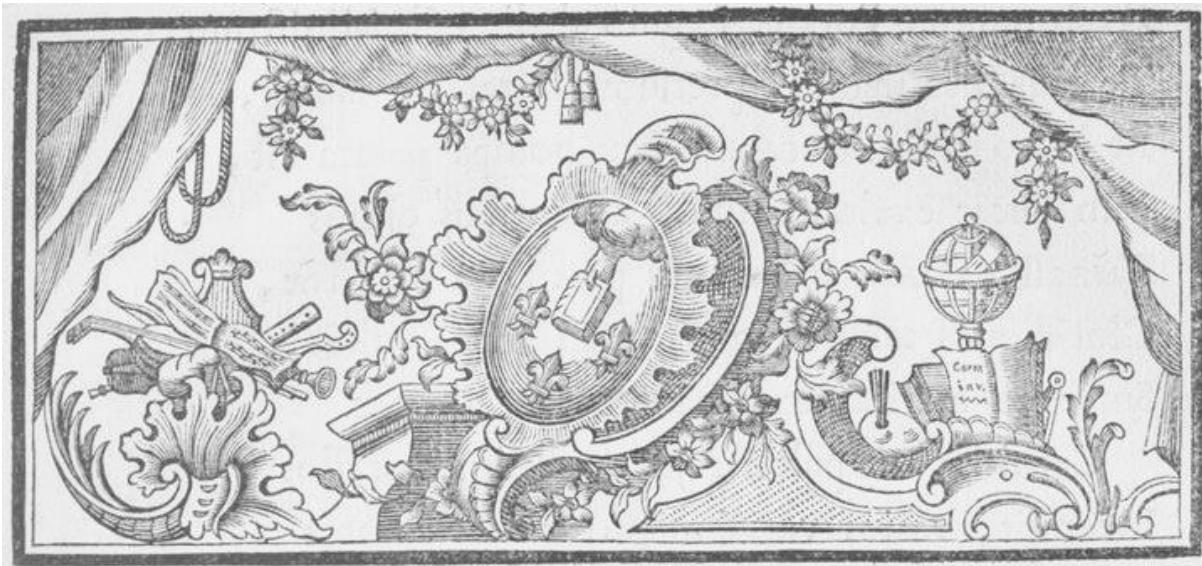
authoritarian social relations, but is desirable for greater well-being of all and the environment we are dependent upon.

## The relations between framework, form, and content

The framework of social ecology and the content of liberatory technology make the forms of freedom more resilient. Form and content, although distinct, are interconnected. Different forms are more conducive to liberatory content. However, as Bookchin points out, the most liberatory form can bring about authoritarian content—although liberatory forms do minimize such authoritarian content compared to authoritarian forms. This can happen through lack of logic and/or lack of compassion. This is why liberatory forms are necessary but insufficient in regards to bringing about the end goals that they aspire towards. Education is more than essential, not just for why to have an anti-authoritarian society, and how to get to an anti-authoritarian society, but also for after such a society exists. Such education is necessary to provide liberatory content in order to maintain the forms of freedom and contribute to the wellbeing of all. More accurate frameworks of how we view the relationships of humans to the environment are essential to help arrive at such form and content, and also to nurture such form and content—both so the form and content can become more liberatory, and also to prevent such liberatory forms from perverting into authoritarian forms. With the content of liberatory technology, the form of libertarian municipalism, as well as a framework of social ecology, a post scarcity society could exist and maintain itself.

The content is in dialogue with the form. The form effects the content, and the content effects the form. Ignorant content within a society based on freedom can lead to artificial scarcity and the transformation from freedom into a hierarchical society. Anarchism as a form is not in and of itself sufficient. We must look beyond anarchism into the field of liberatory technology (empathetic applied logic) during and after the transformation of society from authoritarian to anti-authoritarian.

The more we understand society and ecology, the more we understand the relationships between humans and humans and humans and ecosystems. In order to understand human cognition/behavior, I think we ought to look at the biopsychosocialecotechnological model of human behavior, which sees biology, our psyches, social systems and behaviors, eco-communities, and technology in a dialogue, each component directly and indirectly interdependent upon one another in shaping who we are. Through greater knowledge of human cognition and behavior (nature and nurture), we will arrive at better techniques to change our relations to each other and to the environment we are dependent upon in desirable ways. If our viewpoints of the world don't recognize our interdependence upon each other and our environment, we can arrive at violent decisions through ignorance alone.



## Means

Libertarian municipalism is a tactic and end goal invented by Murray Bookchin. It has a holistic full community analysis. Libertarian municipalism has different end goals and different tactics than traditional community organizing. Municipalism is a way of institutionalizing non-hierarchical, constitutional, confederated, directly democratic forms of freedom through the means and ends of community assemblies. Like anarcho-syndicalism, libertarian municipalism is an approach that:

1. Meets humans needs in the present
2. Decentralizes power from in the present
3. Aims at showing a different way people can organize (building the new world within the shell of the old) during and after a transition to a stateless/marketless society.

At a time where labor has little power due to technological unemployment, it is essential that we find new ways to build the new world within the shell of the old. The democratic assemblies would bring people together organizing without rulers (showing a new way people can organize), meet people's immediate needs within the communities, and take faith and power away from the state and the market.

It is essential that these the assemblies created through libertarian municipalism are made out of the general community and not only the activist community. This must be a movement of commoners, by commoners, and for commoners. Anti-authoritarian activists are essential catalysts for such organization (in regards to education), but municipalism must extend to community members to be effective at building the new world in the shell of the old.

Municipal assemblies can cooperate with worker and community owned co-ops and form a worker/community union. In a mutually beneficial association, worker and community owned co-ops and municipal assemblies can support one another. This third sector, the community sector, would then live alongside the market and the state, while confronting the market and the state. The community sector would protect the people during and after the transition to a liberatory society. If the municipal council does not confederate with other municipal councils, then it merely serves as a mechanism to make that community more free. However, if there are many municipal assemblies that confederate, it becomes a strategy for abolishing socioeconomic hierarchy that contains within it the forms of freedom that can be implemented after socioeconomic hierarchy has been abolished.

Libertarian municipalism can organize all forms of commoners, from workers, to the youth, to the elderly, and to the unemployed, and beyond. People ought to organize on behalf of common humanity and care for others rather than purely selfish reasons. These organizations can pool together resources from those willing and able to give towards community projects, such as fighting against landlordism and building community gardens out of the unused land throughout the neighborhoods, setting up skill shares and free freedom schools and tool libraries, etc. The forms of organization will be organic, for outside of the market and the state people already organize in participatory ways amongst friends. It is just a matter of carrying this participatory organization into a more formal setting and uniting underneath non-hierarchical and liberatory principles.

Without the inefficiency of bureaucracy, and with mutual aid from individuals and confederated municipalities, these organizations would be able to do a lot with a little. There needs to be a holistic outlook on the wellbeing of all of humanity, and by extension the ecosystem we are dependent upon. This could unite people across classes/cultures to create a better world for all (meaning doing the most to help

well-being of all as possible with the limited resources at our disposal). To achieve the end goal of is a dynamic confederated society based on participatory democracy, libertarian municipalism proposes a process of decentralizing power and confederating associations that use participatory democracy.

Bookchin makes very accurate critiques of market socialism, as well as of worker owned co-ops within a market context. In visions of a new society, Bookchin points out that worker owned co-ops will often become profit seeking and assimilate into capitalism, or perish:

*Libertarian municipalism proposes a radically different form of economy one that is neither nationalized nor collectivized according to syndicalist precepts. It proposes that land and enterprises be placed increasingly in the custody of the community more precisely, the custody of citizens in free assemblies and their deputies in confederal councils. How work should be planned, what technologies should be used, how goods should be distributed are questions that can only be resolved in practice. The maxim “from each according to his or her ability, to each according to his or her needs” would seem a bedrock guide for an economically rational society, provided to be sure that goods are of the highest durability and quality, that needs are guided by rational and ecological standards, and that the ancient notions of limit and balance replace the bourgeois marketplace imperative of “grow or die.” (Bookchin).*

Bookchin is advocating communalization of property as opposed to collectivization that syndicalism advocates. Non-authoritarian collective property would exist within the framework and within the limits of the rules of the commons.

Libertarian municipalism allows “means and ends [to] meet in a rational unity”, such that:

*The word politics [...] expresses direct popular control of society by its citizens through achieving and sustaining a true democracy in municipal assemblies — this, as distinguished from republican systems of representation that preempt the right of the citizen to formulate community and regional policies. Such politics is radically distinct from statecraft and the state a professional body composed of bureaucrats, police, military, legislators, and the like, that exists as a coercive apparatus, clearly distinct from and above the people (Bookchin).*

Before, during, and after the fall of states and markets, there need to be institutionalized forms of freedom so we don't fall into the tyranny of structurelessness or the lowest common denominator. For this to happen we need to be educated in regards to logic, empathetic in regards to emotions, willing and able to do the initial work to get an anti-authoritarian economy off the ground, and educated in regards to the forms of freedom, the content of freedom, and the framework of freedom: participatory democracy, liberatory technology, and social ecology. The confederated municipal councils will build the new world within the shell of the old.

<http://www.social-ecology.org/2002/09/harbinger-vol-3-no-1-the-communalist-project/>  
<http://cc4.co/ELQLZ>

[http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist\\_Archives/bookchin/tolibtechpart2.html](http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/bookchin/tolibtechpart2.html)  
<http://cc4.co/RXVCX>

<http://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/murray-bookchin-libertarian-municipalism-an-overview>  
<http://cc4.co/RNTF>

[http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist\\_Archives/bookchin/socecol.html](http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/bookchin/socecol.html)  
<http://cc4.co/ZUZF>

## Drop of Knowledge: Sustainable Solar Power



Though we aren't much concerned with precisely what shade of green our politics is, post-scarcity anarchism does concern itself with ecological health and the use of technology to improve it. It's important that we understand the reality of both, if we hope to advocate for either one:

By all accounts, solar power is definitely less carbon-intensive than conventional power. It's no magic bullet, but it will be a pillar of our sustainable future. Solar has become much cheaper in recent years, but this is primarily due to PV manufacturing moving to China, and that comes with a major loss in sustainability. This is especially problematic because *solar PV is not carbon-negative as soon as it is built*: It has to offset the pollution created through its production by producing power free of pollution.

What this means is that we can only build so much solar PV at once and still hope to maintain a lower rate of pollution. The maximum rate that we can do this depends on the amount of pollution that their production releases: The growth rate of solar electricity must be less than the rate that the energy gets paid back. In other words, the capitalist "plan" of letting the free market take care of rolling out solar by lowering the costs is paradoxical: The more costs are lowered, the more pollution is produced, the lower the rate of sustainable deployment, the faster the technology will be deployed by the market.

Wealthy, first-world countries in temperate climates are not the best candidates for sustainable solar installation. The amount and duration of sun they receive increases the payback time, and so lowers the possible rate of deployment. Poor, third-world countries with dirty infrastructure are likewise not the best candidates for sustainable solar production. The use of dirty energy technologies increases the amount of carbon they must offset, and so lowers the possible rate of deployment. Unfortunately, with both sides beholden to the forces of capitalism, the economically-viable strategy is precisely the worst possible strategy to achieve sustainability.

Energy from intermittent power sources obviously requires energy storage, but also requires overproduction. In order to fulfill all the demand for energy without interruption, we need to generate around triple the amount of energy we expect to use, and store quite a bit of it, as well. Strategies to achieve renewable electricity need to account for the intermittent production in their deployment goals. Batteries, while the most viable technology for energy storage, come with similar problems as the solar panels: Their cost is decreasing primarily due to Chinese manufacturing, and come with more embodied pollution as a result. Knowledge of power is power.

## 5 Things That Never Made Anyone a Billionaire

This is simply a list of things that have never made anyone a billion dollars.

*Housing homeless people.*

With more houses than homeless, this should be easy. Too bad helping people doesn't pay.

*Cheaply and permanently curing diseases.*

Most of the cost of researching medicine lies in the research. If only there were some way that a community could fund research and make the result publicly-available...

*Making consumer products last longer.*

A truly "efficient" mode of production would account for waste, making longevity a valuable quality, rather than a liability that puts future revenues at risk.

*Reducing the amount of waste we produce.*

Capitalism is only capable of exploitation, so of course its solution to the massive streams of waste it produces is to simply exploit the waste for more resources.

*Paying workers the full value of their produce.*

If the workers of society don't get paid more for producing more, why should the bosses get paid more than the workers for having less of a hand in production?



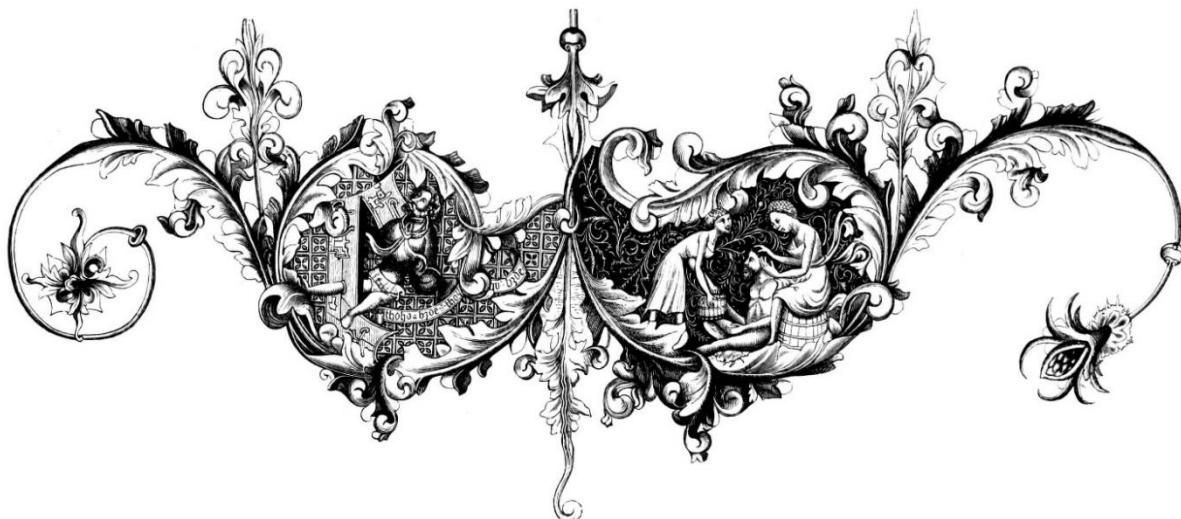
*Fig. 1: Art by someone. Mangling by Ryan Salisbury.*

## Better Off

By Ryan Salisbury

A glut of capitalist propaganda and apologism, techno-optimism, and scientific utopianism has left us with the unforgettable cliché that thanks to the social, technological, and scientific progress of the last few hundred years, we are all better off. Any criticism of the state capitalist system must contend with the undeniable fact that our lives have improved dramatically compared to the backwards and brutal system of medieval feudalism, all thanks to the social reforms and innovations brought about by capitalism. It is quite easy to find even radical anti-capitalists that will reluctantly nod in agreement over this frequently-regurgitated platitude, but much harder to find those who have actually taken a critical look over it. Just about the only group who has questioned this assertion are the nutty anarcho-primitivists, which for most people simply reinforces the strength of the affirmative argument. How much “better off” are we, really? Is it really true that we modern peasants are dramatically better off than feudal peasants, and is any of this thanks to capitalism or its technological landscape?

The very basics of our quality of life should be examined according to our access to the very basics of human life—food, water, and shelter.



The beginning of the industrial revolution was the capitalist agricultural revolution; here our food-producing infrastructure changed radically from its feudal form, becoming much more productive than under the medieval regime thanks to improved technologies and the concentration of agricultural land through enclosure. At least, that's the way most people understand it—a closer examination reveals that enclosure, and most of the other changes alleged to compose the agricultural revolution, actually did very little for productivity, or even for the economy. Most of the increases in productivity were thanks to the strengthening of the rights of the yeoman<sup>1</sup>—peasant family farmers with firm rights over their land and produce. Other increases in productivity could be attributed to the increase in utilization, or the ratio of productive workers to idle workers; in other words, idleness was less tolerated in a more hierarchical work situation. The elimination of idleness will be expanded upon later.

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<sup>1</sup> From [www.nuffield.ox.ac.uk/users/allen/yeoman.pdf](http://www.nuffield.ox.ac.uk/users/allen/yeoman.pdf) ([HTTP://CC4.CO/FZKJID](http://cc4.co/FZKJID)): Describes how most of the benefits of the agricultural revolution came at the hands of the free peasants, not the capitalists or the monarchs.

Since the commodification of food, access to food has become more costly for society's peasants. Since the commodification of food, the price of food has increased continuously, only becoming more affordable to those lucky enough to be on the receiving end of wage increases. Since the commodification of food, the wastage of food has increased to such a degree that dumpster diving in the city could support hundreds or perhaps even thousands of families. In total, food waste is proportionally almost half of all food production, which does not even consider the proportion of food crops which is used to produce utterly inferior biofuels. It is quite likely that in taking those two together, we could rid the world entirely of want for food.

The diet under the capitalist system is unique in its composition, often being called the "western diet", but the "capitalist diet" would probably be more accurate. Under the capitalist diet, most people, more than four in five, experience malnutrition. Despite our modern understanding of diet, and the billions that have been spent in the scientific development of agriculture and dietary science, most people lack vitamins D and E, and a large proportion lack magnesium, calcium, and vitamin A. It is thanks to the capitalist diet that we do not eat the basic vegetables that would supply all these nutrients. The primary characteristic of the capitalist diet is immense quantities of corn, and meat fed by corn; the diet is taken to a comical degree in the modern "paleo" diet, which supposes that our ancient ancestors were both the perpetrators of animal genocide and somehow had an abundant supply of tree nuts, contrary to the reality of hunter-gatherers, who primarily ate berries, tubers, and bitter greens, and secondarily ate meat. Medieval peasants, also unlike the "paleos", had a relatively balanced diet, with a higher calorie and nutritional content<sup>2</sup> than our highly-sophisticated diet of corn and animal flesh grown by corn.

The production of food, similarly, has turned into an absurd contradiction of advanced science and inefficacy: Our agricultural system today uses more external, synthetic inputs than ever, while producing more waste than ever. The amount of synthetic nitrogen added to the soil, which could be entirely replaced by planting edible legumes, or weeds such as clover, is so great that it's actually disrupting ecosystems. Phosphorous is in a similar category, except unlike nitrogen, many scientists suggest that we are actually in danger of running out of its artificial, mineral source, resulting in widespread food crisis should no adequate replacement be found. The two together can cause effects such as eutrophication, resulting in algae blooms and anoxia, which disrupt the situation of biodiversity in aquatic environments. This does not even consider pesticide and herbicide use, each of which now numbers in the millions of tons, while the targets of such poisons grow increasingly resistant to it. Similarly, animal husbandry is the chief source of antibiotics use, while it also produces more than anything else diseases resistant to such treatments. The waste problem in agriculture is quite more repulsive, with megatons of compostable plant materials ending up in landfills, and animal farms producing rivers of shit. On the whole, agriculture is unequivocally the chief contributor to climate change, biodiversity loss, and all other forms of ecological devastation.

**The water situation** is quite a bit simpler than that of food, which is so complex in its horribleness that it's impossible to cover in its entirety in such an article. But this is not to suggest that the water situation is any better today, which is actually a relatively recent phenomenon. In *The Conquest of Bread*, Kropotkin notes: Communism (as in everyday communism) "prevails in [ . . . ] the distribution of one commodity at least, which is found in abundance, the water supplied to each house."<sup>3</sup> Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, water has been increasingly enclosed, often by such force that many have termed the enclosure process the "water wars." This has been aided, in recent years, by laws that penalize the collection of

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<sup>2</sup> From [http://people.eku.edu/resorc/Medieval\\_peasant\\_diet.htm](http://people.eku.edu/resorc/Medieval_peasant_diet.htm) ([HTTP://CC4.CO/EXIRC](http://cc4.co/EXIRC)). Medieval peasants were typically farmers who did a lot of manual labor, so of course, they ate a lot of healthy food. We aren't, and don't.

<sup>3</sup> p.56: Kropotkin's description resembles today's public water infrastructure with no prices.

rainwater, considering it a violation of building codes not to be connected to the municipal water supply, or worse, theft under the law. In other places, air and water pollution exists to such a degree as to make rain or well water collection dangerous, putting residents at the whims of water treatment plants thanks to the nearby factory owners who have no interest in the health of the local populations.

The process of privatization and pollution gives capitalists yet another advantage: They are able to charge whatever they want for the most essential substance of sustenance, and of course the good capitalist will take advantage of this situation. The result, once again, is less for the peasant and more for the lord, or in many cases, water becomes the more expensive commodity compared to something the new lord is more interested in selling, such as Coca-Cola. In the privatization of water we have seen the viciousness that the capitalists are willing to deploy to defend the sources of their profits. The riots in Cochabamba, Bolivia are the archetypal example, with the government deploying heavily armed, heavily armored troops against a population defending their right to fulfill their thirst with the same water supplies they have always used.

One of the commonly-cited advantages of the private property system of course, is its ability to efficiently and rationally ration provisions so that shortages are not experienced. We hear this time and again from the right wing, the apologists, the economists, and the bosses, that this, above all, is why private property is necessary, that this is why socialism will ultimately fail, why socialism has failed. Yet it is in the highly capitalist countries where drought has recently become most worrisome, where water supplies have run short thanks to massive water use by bottling companies, animal agriculture, monstrous data centers, fracking operations, and the rest of industry. The phenomenon of the sinkhole is symbolic of not only the provision of water under a capitalist system, but could represent the capitalist system as a whole, which proudly exploits every microgram of raw material at as close to light speed as possible, describing this velocity as “efficiency” and the result as increasing quality of life.

**Thanks to one of the most massive failures** in capitalism’s “dismal” history, housing is somewhat more affordable, but this is a humorously relative statement. Housing prices have increased manifold over any timescale take, rendering houses unaffordable to anyone except those with the knowledge to build them on their own or willing to submit themselves to the mercy of the bankers. As in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it’s not because of the labor that went into the house, the materials that form the house, or the increased utility of the house that form its value, but the potential profit that could be generated from the house that result in its exorbitant price. It’s thanks to the relation of the house to the rest of society, and the ability to profit from the house’s resale that those wealthy enough are willing to pay such a price for it<sup>4</sup>.

Despite the apparently high value of many houses, many other houses sit unoccupied for years, unwanted, yet scarcely more affordable than those highly-coveted ones, and no more available to those in need of shelter, either. The design of modern homes has changed over the years, such that these empty homes often need to be powered and climate-controlled, otherwise they will develop molds or pests, and their grass lawns must be manicured lest they develop weeds. Each empty home represents not just wasted construction and wasted resources, but also an act of violence toward each homeless person prevented from living there with the sticks and guns of the proprietarians.

Despite each part of a Western home improving in its performance and efficiency, between the foundation, the frame, the walls, the roof, the windows, the doors, the pipes, the ventilation, the

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<sup>4</sup> Kropotkin pp.69-70: Kropotkin describes a relational theory of value here. Unlike the individual receiver perspective of subjective theory of value, or the individual producer perspective of labor theory of value, the relational view is a social ecology perspective that is the heart of the science of “transferics”.

electricity, the heat, and the cool, houses have become no more material, water, or energy-efficient<sup>5</sup> than their medieval counterparts, last no longer, and are often hardly more comfortable. This is all thanks to the commodification and contractification of construction, where each part of a house, each component of each part, each design of each concern, each installation of each concern, and the whole assembly of each house, are all done by independent and isolated companies and contractors who have no tendency or interest in coordinating with one another to build quality homes. Because of the high prices, the focus is entirely on cost, convenience, and aesthetic, with no mind to longevity, efficacy, or efficiency.

**Despite the infrastructure of the basics worsening**, surely other areas of quality of life have increased: We have a longer lifespan, more leisure time, we are more socially connected, and our increasing specialization has given us a higher purpose in life! After all, this is economics, and economics is all about trade-offs, so if we take a small cost in one area, we could have an immense benefit in another.



**Certainly our lifespan** has increased. What most people mean when they say this is that “life expectancy” has increased, which is not quite the same; while our maximum lifespan has indeed grown beyond that of medieval times, the change is not as dramatic as that of life expectancy. The devil is in the details when it comes to life expectancy, because it does not describe merely the average age that an adult dies, but also includes infant mortality. In other words, this measure of “average lifespan” is extremely susceptible to the number of infants that die. It’s the latter that is responsible for the bulk of the change in life expectancy, and there are just three changes that are responsible for nearly the entirety of the difference: Hand-washing, antibiotics, and vaccination.

Hand-washing was discovered to have been an important practice for doctors by Ignaz Semmelweis, who examined differences in infant mortality rates between two clinics in his town; he realized that doctors in one clinic, who performed autopsies and then delivered babies had a much higher incidence of child mortality, compared to the midwives of the other clinic, who only delivered babies. Semmelweis suggested that doctors have some sort of essence of death, which we now know to be pathogens, which was spread to the babies due to the lack of sanitation. This may seem obvious to us now, but in Semmelweis’s time, this was widely regarded as quackery, and Semmelweis died insane and alone in an asylum, having been ridiculed for his discovery.

Antibiotics have a long history, going all the way back to the original literate societies, or perhaps beyond. It has long been known that mold (or in Russia, warm soil) was a useful treatment for wounds, with soldiers carrying bread or oil cakes with them to treat their wounds in battle. Many scholars, apothecaries, and scientists, well before the vaunted “discovery” by Alexander Fleming, noted the use of molds in staving off bacteria, with increasing specificity until Fleming’s study. Today, antibiotics are primarily used to prevent disease in concentrated animal farming operations (CAFOs), and as a result, are becoming increasingly ineffective in the treatment of infections. We now observe, in increasing amounts, resistance to antipathogenic drugs by staphylococci, enterococci, gonococci, streptococci, salmonella, and tuberculosis. Now, and soon in increasing degree thanks to climate change, this resistance is transferrable between species thanks to “horizontal gene transfer”, where diseases do the neighborly thing to one another and provide the gift of drug resistance.

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<sup>5</sup> From <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/wp/2013/02/13/u-s-homes-are-getting-more-efficient-but-still-use-just-as-much-energy/> ([HTTP://CC4.CO/ZFYEPC](http://cc4.co/ZFYEPC)), among others.

Vaccination, originally an evolution of inoculation attributed to the wits of Edward Jenner, has all but eliminated the most heinous diseases that have plagued us for centuries, such as measles, mumps, smallpox, malaria, influenza, and so on. In the Western world, we have all but rendered extinct these diseases, at least until now. Thanks to a small group of disgusting “entrepreneurs” eager to exploit the psychological weaknesses of ordinary people, and a widely-refuted, retracted study on the MMR vaccine, one in three young adult parents in the United States believe that vaccines cause autism in children, and we have since had the largest outbreak of measles in decades, with no signs of the anti-vaxxer movement slowing down yet. This, on top of the other pernicious effects of capitalism on medicine, such as the existence of diseases we have eradicated in the third world, thanks to their inability to pay for the vaccines we produce here in the West, whose production carries almost no cost. It is because vaccine research, and the resulting vaccines themselves, are private property that there is any concern to begin with over “recuperating research costs”, as apologists cite as the reason for charging far more than the cost of production to the receivers of these medicines.

Man is not a being whose exclusive purpose is eating, drinking, and providing shelter for himself. As soon as his material wants are satisfied, other needs, which, generally speaking, may be described as of an artistic character, will thrust themselves forward. These needs are of the greatest variety; they vary with each and every individual; and the more society is civilized, the more will individuality be developed, and the more will desires be varied. *Kropotkin*

**Leisure time** seems to be far and above one of the most oft-cited improvements we have experienced in quality of life since medieval times. According to the modern view, derived ultimately from that of Thomas Hobbes, the life of the medieval peasant was “brutish”, with peasants working 16-hour days, toiling in service of their lord and king, giving away most of their produce in taxes. On the contrary, one of the earliest movements in the political economics of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, one which had a wide consensus and as much vitriol as today’s right-wing distaste for “entitled” welfare recipients, was the idea that peasant farmers were lazy because they only worked about half the year. Medieval peasants enjoyed numerous religious holidays, over 150 of them in European countries. These were gradually eliminated, most prominently by following Voltaire’s suggestion of moving them all to Sundays, which was already a day of rest for peasants<sup>6</sup>. “Yes, that may be,” you think, “but they still worked 16-hour days, and they gave most of their produce to the royals.” While it is true that peasant farmers were out in the field for up to 16 hours in a day, do not mistake it for 16 hours of toil. This time included up to 8 hours of mealtimes and napping, and was work done at a pace much more leisurely than that during and after the agricultural and industrial revolutions<sup>7</sup>. The rent paid to the lord by serfs, which does not include the free peasantry, was comparable or far less than that paid to the bourgeois landlords following primitive accumulation. Taxes were even less, for as even Kropotkin notes, it was extremely unlikely for a peasant to ever see a government official or pay a tax. While it is important not to romanticize the working life of peasants, this goes both ways, and the image many of us have of the filth-covered, hunch-backed peasants performing hours and hours of exhausting manual labor is a much more accurate depiction of industrial wage work.

The work itself involved comradery with neighbors, as medieval agriculture took place in the commons, and neighbors intimately depended on and worked with one another. This sort of work can

<sup>6</sup> From *The Invention of Capitalism*, Michael Perelman, 2000; p.18

<sup>7</sup> From Schor, [http://groups.csail.mit.edu/mac/users/rauch/worktime/hours\\_workweek.html](http://groups.csail.mit.edu/mac/users/rauch/worktime/hours_workweek.html) ([HTTP://CC4.CO/DZAKR](http://cc4.co/DZAKR))

still be seen in some parts of the world, and is depicted in literary works involving peasant farmers, such as in Dostoyevsky: The difficult work of farming was done in big groups, and typically involved neighbors getting drunk together and singing as they worked. The culture of many traditional alcoholic beverages, if they did not revolve around marriage, revolved around neighborly coworking. In contrast, work today is lonely, increasingly lonely, as we are pushed into telework schedules, reducing the cost of capital and the possibility of worker organization. Today we have numerous high-tech devices and specialized venues for people to socialize, to repair the damage done by commodity relations, specialization, and suburbanization. These fixes can even exacerbate the problem, leading to even more extreme fixes, such as the ever-more utilized medication to cure social anxiety, a problem which can only exist in the context of the normalcy of social isolation.

Meanwhile, our work has become increasingly meaningless and alienating. No one within the capitalist system, from the richest, rothschildiest, richie rich to the most destitute, groveling, dirt-eating slave, has any real control over what they produce. From the bottom, production is determined by the top, and from the top, production is determined by the market, and in both cases, even cognition is shaped by the demands of capital and the market. For all of us in between, we are limited to merely being one small part in an ever-growing whole, either toiling at a job that we ourselves consider pointless and unnecessary, or providing support for those that do. “Work” today does not mean providing for oneself or for others, but the production of commodities. For those of us lucky enough to do something that we enjoy, the demands of the market make even this enjoyable work stressful and agonizing, rendering an activity as trite and fun as baking cupcakes into a mission-critical operation to maximize profits.



*Fig. 2: Art by Ryan Salisbury.*

**It's important** not to rest on one's laurels, and this is especially true when there is no accolade to celebrate in the first place. The labor movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century certainly won us some improvements over the industrial capitalist hell that emerged prior, but since then, we have seen no substantial improvements in our lives. The peasantry of today is qualitatively little better off than that of the Middle Ages. The march toward post-scarcity might even be considered the recovery of pre-scarcity, the revenge of the yeoman, or the trek backwards from a long walk in the wrong direction. The gewgaws and doodads of industrial capitalism are no substitute for our liberty and sustenance. We are being buffaloed and bought off by those privileged bums and their bumbling bilge which proclaims we are “better off”. Better off we are not, but certainly we could be with liberatory technology and social ecology.

## De Olde Advertissement

Hello, citizens and eligible voters!

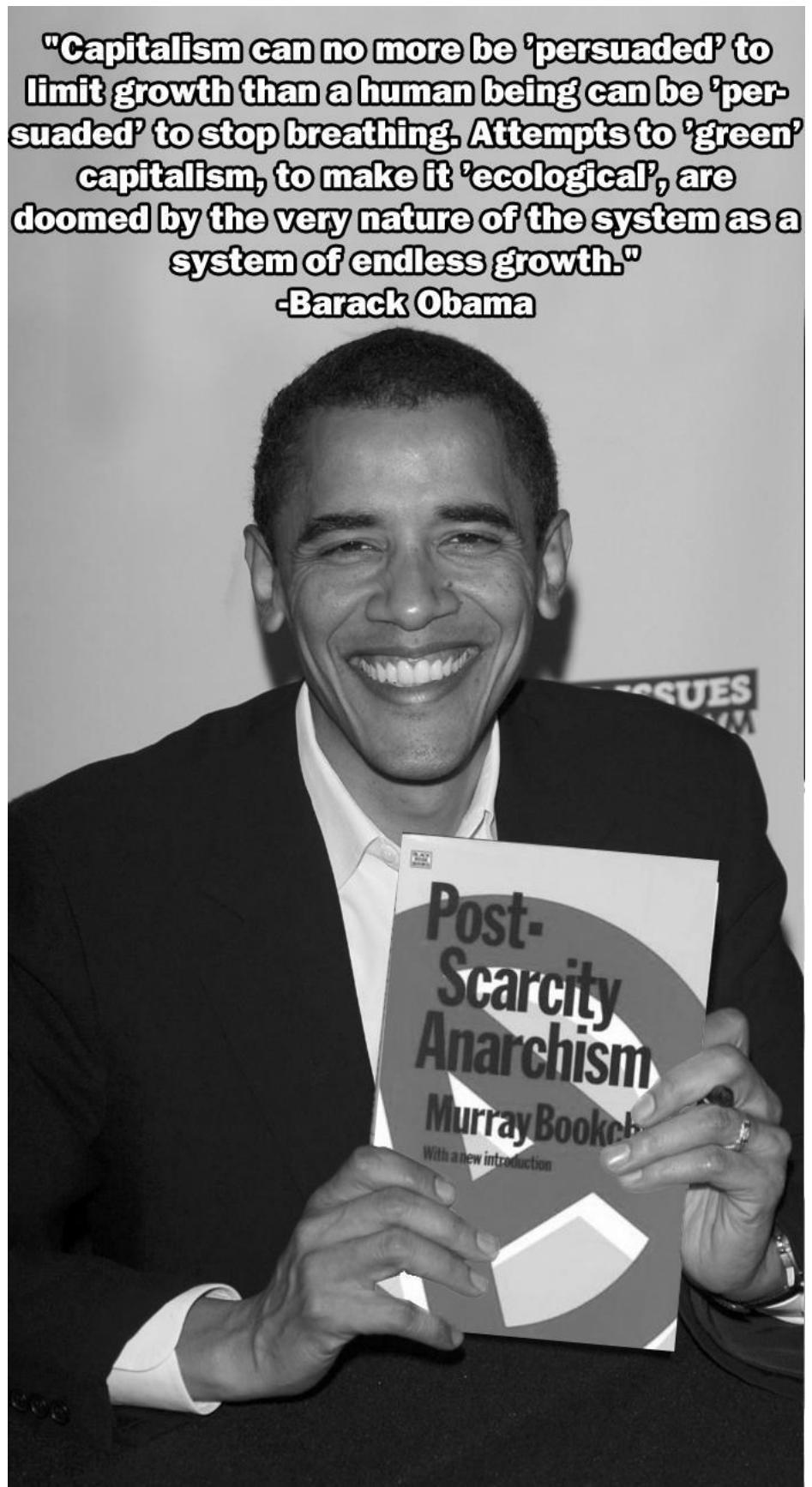
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## The Ramp Strategy

By 平和島 静雄 (Heiwajima Shizuo)

Modern, right-wing anarchist philosophies like anarcho-capitalism are a great source of insight into how our left-wing traditions must evolve into the future. The new revolutionary front is not in the workplace, it is in the comments section. In order to successfully achieve victories for the oppressed, we must win internet arguments, and to do that we must base our political theory on objective moral principles. Without starting from philosophical axioms constructed out of contorted metaphors that depend on the ambiguity of language, we will forever be intellectually outgunned in our politics. Without ensuring that we deal with people being wrong on the internet, the iniquities of statist oppression will creep in under our noses and we will be washed away with the current.

With this in mind, it is important that we begin developing objective moral principles so that we do not suffer decisive, early losses on the digital battleground. As you, the reader knows, our end goal is a totalitarian bureaucratic state where secret police hover over you at all times waiting to steal away the fruits of your individual labor and give it to the indolent peasants, and we need to frame this goal in terms of achieving liberty or no one will ever swallow it. Thus, we have the problem of not only pushing society towards ever more taxation and authority, but to trick everyone into thinking they are being liberated as we take away their economic freedom.

The first principle we need is one to justify taxation. There are many ways we can go about this, but clearly the best would be if we could frame it in naturalistic and egoistic terms. We should present our end goal of 100% taxation as beginning from the self:

Your body is the steward and sovereign domain of your mind. Because your body is its own sovereign, your mind is a citizen of your body. Without your body providing, managing, and distributing the space, resources, and services your mind needs in order to survive, the mind wouldn't exist. Your body taxes your mind by using its output to improve its infrastructure. This is a principle called "self-taxation": Your body's stewardship of your mind makes it sovereign and grants it the right to levy a tax in any form it desires on any occupant of its sovereign domain.

From self-taxation, we can conclude that anyone who occupies collectivist territory may have taxes levied on them in order to benefit the Collective. This is the definition of "collectivist taxation", which is what we're all striving for. Collectivist taxation is the ultimate form of freedom because you obtain the negative liberty of freedom from making decisions about production, and it encompasses all other forms of liberty. Instead of the oppressive conditions that anarcho-capitalism would put us under, in a truly free society no individual needs to make a decision and may blindly obey the Collective instead.

Rather than describing things in complicated nuance, we can simply examine any situation under the simple lens of taxation. A society without taxes is a total dystopian nightmare. To deny the right to taxation is to initiate the use of violence against the Collective by encroaching on its domain without offering anything in return. This is the moral equivalent of child murder or dog rape, and we, the Collective, suggest that you use these analogies any time someone suggests lowering or eliminating taxes.

Murder violates the right to tax because the murderer is destroying individuals' ability to pay the tax. Theft violates the right to tax because the thief is stealing potential tax revenue from the Collective. The idea of an anarcho-capitalist society where no one pays taxes to an all-encompassing state is literally genocide, and therefore we are justified in defending our communes with mass murder on a lesser scale than actual genocide.

The second principle we need is one to justify secret police. In order to have a truly free society, no one may initiate force against the Collective. As we've established, the reason for this is because doing

so would violate their right to taxation. Therefore, to be free we must have the ability to prevent the initiation of force and respond to the initiation of force. The problem is that regular police are too obvious with their uniforms, causing people to simply wait until they are out of sight of the police to commit their brutal tax-avoiding crimes.

Therefore, a free society must have secret police, or no one's rights can be guaranteed. There is a high risk in creating secret police of double-agents causing violence and oppression by disobeying the Collective. Secret police mustn't know the identities of other secret police so that they can all monitor one another and prevent disobedience. In fact, we cannot be sure that no one will be outside of the eye of the secret police unless everyone is one of the secret police. Total oppression is the true source of freedom. This principle is called "panslavery".

With these extremely well-thought-out, objective moral principles, we must take to the internets and turn the tide of the revolution in our favor. Quitting your job to manage a half-dozen sockpuppets on Youtube, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, and Yo is the least you can do for the Collective. We need to enslave the hard-working anarcho-capitalists and their potential cis white male followers, who are hundreds of times more productive than the individuals in the Collective. Without these highly productive individuals creating all the products for the Collective's use, there is no way that the Collective can live off the fruits of others' labor. Not a single one of us wants to work and in order to guarantee that outcome, step one is to start winning online debates.



Armed with the dual weapons of self-taxation and panslavery, it should be a snap to trick people into achieving our dreams for us. We, elite members of the Collective, and you, the indoctrinated reader, and slowly trick society into pushing us incompetent slackers up to the top of the pyramid. We call this the "ramp strategy", and it will put our left-wing cult squarely on the shoulders of the giants. Get out there troops, and start brainwashing people.

*Verbatim from a Seattle newschannel, November 30th, 1999:* ¶Reporter: 'There are some people here, roaming about... well not exactly roaming, they seem organized. I don't know who they are, they're all dressed in black, they have black hoods on, and black flags... a flag with nothing on it.' ¶Anchor: 'A flag with nothing on it?' ¶Reporter: 'That's right, it's totally black.'

# Unwanted Information and Depressing Truths: A Critique of Capitalism

By Little-Blood

All the values of fascism are inherent in our current socio economic system.



**In fact, capitalism is simply fascism internalized;** at the turn of the century our oppressors had to come up with more manipulative and subversive means to keep people submissive and compliant. We have been groomed and conditioned to accept the conditions coerced upon us; As Aldous Huxley once prophesied, we are currently experiencing “The enjoyment of servitude”. Every vice (within reason) is accepted so long as people accept the reality around them and fall in line. The propaganda model, as monolithic and callous as it has ever been, works at turning the screws on the average citizens making their opinions for them and deciding what stories are “news worthy”. The ignorance of the masses is no byproduct, it is a necessity for the current system to flourish. Apathy reigns when information is withheld, when peoples’ minds are filthied with advertisements, subversive media, celebrity culture, fashionable consumer commodities and puppet politics. All smoke and mirrors so the corporate elite and wealthy can live their lives of freedom and luxury. “A left-wing conspiracy!” Well, allow me to explain why such a bold statement is sadly true.

Capitalism goes hand in hand with another concept: Slavery. You have to willingly accept and justify slavery if you want to come up with a good argument as to why capitalism is favourable. That’s a pretty difficult task when we live in the 21st century, and most people are liberated, intelligent and moral enough to acknowledge slavery as abhorrent. Slavery is what gives power to the companies and corporations that run this show; they are the cornerstone of our current globalised market economy and therefore hold most of the power and influence. With the emancipation of slaves in the 19th century it is hard to make the comparison of modern day slave with that of the more commonly associated term. Allow me to digress; A slave is somebody who is owned by a separate entity, whose labour is used to profit someone other than themselves, whose time is not their own and who has no option but to comply with said situation in order to survive. This is an apt description of both a slave and the average working class citizen. Like most things, there are different degrees of the term slave; under no circumstance have I confused the average lifestyle of someone in the modern age with that of a slave forced to work the fields in the 19th century, but unfortunately the principle is still the same and thus I deem the term correct.

The existence of private property allows the means of production to be owned and controlled by a small elite. That is the very concept of private property, it is a separate legal entity which has no loyalties to society at large. The average person who is born without the privilege of inherited wealth and property, has one thing that they can trade in order to survive, and that is their labour. They have to prostitute themselves to the owners of the means of production (“the employing class”) in order to get the essentials to survive. Therefore there is no choice in the matter of work, it is simply a matter of survival. Working solely in order to survive is more commonly referred to as ‘slavery’. It makes no difference that a green piece of paper has exchanged hands. Wage slavery is still slavery, period. When you are born into inherited debt simply for existing this is the only choice most working class people have. Furthermore, a large portion of their sacred and valued time on this planet is devoted to the interests of somebody else; It is not their own. Even the surplus wage that people earn only slightly opens the scope of their freedom. They can afford more expensive things, they can satiate their ‘latent needs’, they can gratify their illusory

wants that have been created for them with the aid of billboards and advertisements! It is also worth noting that a more common trait found amongst the working classes is a desire to become inebriated and numb from their own lifestyles. Surplus wage is spent on self-destruction. Smoking and drinking, recreational activities that shorten their lifespans. It is an escapism from the daily grind, a need to forget the dehumanising process that the average worker has to endure. As Oscar Wilde once wrote; “work is the curse of the drinking classes”. Reward and renumeration are symbolised with more worthless green pieces of paper yet any requests outside of that norm, such as, “I want more time to spend teaching and playing with my children,” or, “I want more time to pursue my creative and spiritual interests,” fall upon deaf ears and remain unanswered.

Therefore the employee-employer relationship is only marginally removed from the master-slave model; it is only by a matter of degrees. The average corporation or company, which more often than not takes the role of “employer” in modern society, is also a shining example of fascism internalized. There is usually very little democracy utilised within these structures, workers have little say in the direction of the company — in the design of the company’s branding, identity, etc, in major tasks and in the way the company is run on a day-to-day basis — and by extension, they have no say on their own lives. Of course things have improved since the workhouses of the past, but again, by a matter of degrees. It is still apparent that a company is a pyramid structure with a top down hierarchical system by which the majority are submissive to the requests of a small elite few that are above them. Again, this is not secretive information, it is blatantly apparent. The only excuse that gives this model any form of tenuous morality is the idea of meritocracy (the fabled ‘self-made man’ we hear so much about). This is the idea that the individual can climb the social ladder if he chooses to shit on his equals. It’s the carrot on the stick that keeps the fragile house of cards upright, the goal that motivates us to rise at 7 a.m. most mornings, Because according to the Social Darwinist economics model which capitalism employs; we are all predatory savages with ingrained selfish desires to consume one another and elevate ourselves. Now if that is not a fascistic principle, then I don’t know what is.

**The meritocracy** we see being espoused on a day-to-day basis fails to address the deeply-ingrained social injustices apparent in our present system. If an egalitarian and more equitable society were fashioned, then the ideas of meritocracy would have much more weight because everybody would have begun life on an even playing field. But there is no way one can speak of meritocracy when some innocent children are born into run-down ghettos while others are born into privileged aristocracy and nepotism. The class divide prevents this idea from being employed at all.

There are also more subtle forms of conditioning that occur throughout society, such as the work ethic; employers deserve a “good days’ work for a good days’ pay”. Anyone that doesn’t work is deemed “lazy,” apparently the most disgusting crime imaginable. Such disdain is heaped upon those who seemingly don’t “work” in society. “Parasites” and “leeches,” they’re called —unfortunately, as previously mentioned, the propaganda machine is still fully operational. It is successful in hiding the ruling caste, for which these terms are much more apt.

**Of course** we no longer live in a world so morally definable in black and white. There are elements of socialism that have also been employed in our current society. Ideas such as welfare, council houses and free healthcare are designed to create a standard of living that no human being should fall beneath. I’m sure that you will agree that these are fantastic humanist achievements that should be justly praised and defended. They acknowledge basic human rights and are a beacon of hope for what we can achieve. Yet they are not enough alone to bridge the widening gap of income inequality and class divide. They are constantly being encroached upon by money hungry profiteers who seek to privatise them and take them

~~ANARCHY~~  
OVER  
A P A T H Y

HANG  
IN THERE

kitty



WATCHING THE  
CLOCK.



ARE YOU  
WORKING HARD  
OR HARDLY WORK  
IN OUR



WORRY  
WORRY  
WORRY

WORRY

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WORRY

HOW TO BE A  
HAPPY WAGE SLAVE!

PROSTITUTE SELF THROUGH  
INTERVIEW PROCESS...

ACCEPT LOW INCOME AND  
TEDIOUS, REPETITIVE WORK IN  
ORDER TO PROFIT SOMEONE ELSE...

ALLOW SELECTED COMPANY TO RUIN  
BRAIN WITH STATS, SLOGANS  
AND CORPORATE JARGON...

ARBEIT MACHT FREI



WORK TIL  
DEATH...



from the hands of the people, and are constantly being criticised and scrutinised by the politically biased media machine.

We can further this concept of slavery and capitalism being intertwined when we consider slave labour and the exploitation of workers in foreign countries. They are utilised for their cheap labour, for the reduced regulations set by the state and for the fact that they will in turn produce the most profit for the shareholders and owners of said company. Most useless consumer commodities are produced in sweatshops in this way. This is well-known information in most of the 'civilised' world, yet the amorality of the system is so corroding that most people are too apathetic to give it much thought. The multinationals are to blame for these abominations, this 'blind eye to human rights' but they also provide us with all the luxuries that make us happy right? It also might be worth noting that corporations garnered much sought-after rights by hijacking the 14th amendment in the American constitution; An amendment with the express intent of rectifying injustice for newly freed slaves and their children but could also give corporations more power and influence through corporate personhood.



The dangers of being apathetic to these problems are the most severe imaginable. Not only does it involve complete destruction of a universal humanistic conscience (what we know to be right and wrong), it will also ultimately annihilate our very existence. Recent reports and studies published by NASA and the UN (Both politically un-biased entities that merely collate data and information) show how anthropogenic carbon emissions and the burning of fossil fuels has severely damaged our planet's natural ecosystem, left us with a meagre 15 years before these problems are irreversible, and could ultimately destroy the human race. This is far removed from a conspiracy theory and left wing rhetoric; this is based on statistical analysis and comes from viable sources which, as I previously mentioned, don't have any political ties or reason to manipulate this information. For example, 97% of climate scientists mutually agree that these results are true (references can be found on a whole host of expert websites on the internet). Industrialisation has caused pollution on an unprecedented level. Aside from the good that it has brought humanity, when matched with the gluttony inherent in the capitalistic system, it has also brought mass devastation. As well as wheelchairs and watches, the fashionable commodities that barrage our eyes daily are also produced in these factories and the more they can produce, the more they can sell. Mass buying power means even more profit for the 1%. The result of their incessant desire to dominate the natural world, and consume anything they can imagine a currency symbol on, is certain death. Infinite growth by the consumption of finite resources is simply illogical. This is not a statement in my eyes that is even in need of justifying as it is glaringly obvious to anyone who would take the time to contemplate it. What world do we want to leave for our children? What world will be left if we continue on this path? What legacy do we want to leave behind?

The ancient civilisations that we have lauded as our predecessors, the great empires such as Greece and Rome, all eventually fell into the abyss of history, leaving their mark with unsustainable societies built on the backs of barbaric



Today's nonviolent replacement for revolution goes something like this: ¶ "So the solution to the problems of private industry is actually more private industry, eh?" ¶ "Of course." ¶ "And you say you all get bonuses when we do that?" ¶ "Oh yes, tremendous, quivering bonuses!" ¶ "And you're sure that it'll work, right? You know, science and stuff?" ¶ "Of course! We have a host of young and experienced boys in the Chamber of Commerce ready to give us all a stroke of genius on this mounting problem!" ¶ "Ah, well, I don't quite know what you mean by 'quivering,' but it sounds good as long as nobody gets fucked."



imperialism and super states. Anyone with an ounce of intelligence can see the obvious fallacy that this employs — if we build our civilisation on the mistakes laid before us by buried archaic philosophies, we are doomed to repeat them.

It stands to reason then, that if we can condemn the ideas of communism and socialism on the basis that their pragmatic attempts fell into disarray then we must also do the same with capitalism - By ignoring the differences between the ideals and the outcomes we can destroy its integral concept, before it destroys us. Furthermore, if we can expand our social consciousness to fully understand the potentials renewable energy sources have to offer and combine them with the infinitely expanding realms of scientific, medical and technological progress, we could all live in a post scarcity world with technological unemployment, meaning more freedom for all! More time to spend evolving and progressing as human beings; not merely as tools or instruments of a larger overshadowing entity. Mass production should be where it belongs, in the hands of

the masses; **All is for all!**

"Labour is entitled to all that it produces!" "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need" and all the other excellent truisms on the subject declared by brilliant minds. Too unrealistic and idealist? I don't think so. Progress starts with a dream and a desire, Ideals are the stars by which we shall guide our ships.

I believe the corrupting quality of power these institutions create breeds a caste of psychotic exploiters who ratify their actions behind the guise of a company (or government or religion), shielding themselves from their own morality... or lack of it. They do not represent the mass populace that lives in servitude and disillusion, within their shadows. It is our duty in order to further the evolution of the human race and to save it from extinction, to dismantle and destroy these institutions. Institutions that serve no purpose to the people and contrarily imprison us and keep us enslaved.



Fig. 3: Art by Little-Blood

# Municipalization of the Economy

By Janet Biehl

*As the Rojava revolution continues, the nature of its economy has been much discussed. As I have written previously, Rojava aspires to a social economy based on cooperatives. In recent weeks, several people have asked me for Murray Bookchin's ideas about the economy: what are the economic aspects of libertarian municipalism? I've put together a summary of his thinking here, based on the sources listed at the end of this article. —Janet Biehl*



**In a capitalist economy**, the means of production—industry—as well as land, raw and finished materials, financial wealth are concentrated in private hands. The alternative is a social economy, in which ownership of such property—wholly or in part—is shifted to the society as a whole. The intention is to create an alternative society, to put economic life directly into the hands of the men and

women who are vitally involved with it. An alternative system would be one that has both the desire and the ability to curtail or eliminate profit-seeking in favor of humanistic values, practices, and institutions. As Murray Bookchin pointed out, a social economy can take several forms.

## Cooperatives

Cooperatives are small-scale enterprises that are collectively owned and operated. They may be producers' cooperatives, or they may be the collectivized and self-managed enterprises such as are advocated by anarcho-syndicalists. Their internal structures of sharing foreshadow the emergence of sharing in the wider society

In the 1970s, many American radicals formed cooperatives, which they hoped could constitute an alternative to large corporations and ultimately replace them. Bookchin welcomed this development, but as the decade wore on, he noticed that more and more those once-radical economic units were absorbed into the capitalist economy. While cooperatives' internal structures remained admirable, he thought that in the marketplace they could become simply another kind of small enterprise with their own particularistic interests, competing with other enterprises, even with other cooperatives.

Indeed, for two centuries, cooperatives have too often been obliged to conform to marketplace dictates, regardless of the intentions of their advocates and founders. First, a cooperative becomes entangled in the web of exchanges and contracts typical. Then it finds that its strictly commercial rivals are offering the same goods it offers, but at lower prices. Like any enterprise, it finds that if it is to stay in business, it must compete by lowering its prices in order to win customers. One way to lower prices is to grow in size, in order to benefit from economies of scale. Thus growth becomes necessary for the cooperative—that is, it too must “grow or die.” Even the most idealistically motivated cooperative will have to absorb or undersell its competitors or close down. That is, it will have to seek profits at the expense of humane values. The imperatives of competition gradually refashion the cooperative into a capitalistic enterprise, albeit a collectively owned and managed one. Although cooperation is a necessary part of an alternative economy, cooperatives by themselves are insufficient to challenge the capitalist system.

Indeed, Bookchin argued, any privately-owned economic unit, whether it is managed cooperatively or by executives, whether it is owned by workers or by shareholders, is susceptible to assimilation, whether its members like it or not. As long as capitalism exists, competition will always require the enterprises within it to look for lower costs (including the cost of labor), greater markets, and advantages over their rivals, in order to maximize their profits. They will tend ever more to value human beings by their levels of productivity and consumption rather than by any other criteria.

### Public Ownership

A truly socialized, alternative economy would be one, then, in which profit-seeking must be restrained or, better, eliminated. Since economic units are incapable of restraining their own profit seeking from within, they must be subjected to restraint from without. Thus alternative economic units, to avoid assimilation, must exist in a social context that curtails their profit seeking externally. They must be embedded in a larger community that has the power not only to bridle a specific enterprise's pursuit of profit but to control economic life generally. No social context in which capitalism is permitted to exist will ever successfully curtail profit seeking. The expansionist imperatives of capitalism will always try to overturn external controls, will always compete, will always press for expansion.

Such a society must be one that "owns" the economic units itself. That is, it must be one in which socially significant property—the means of production—is placed under public control or, insofar as ownership still exists, public ownership.

The notion of public ownership is not popular today, since its most familiar form is state socialism, as exemplified by the Soviet Union. The nation-state expropriates private property and becomes its owner. State ownership, however, led to tyranny, mismanagement, corruption—to anything but a sharing, cooperative economy.

The phrase "public ownership" implies ownership by the people, but state ownership is not public because the state is an elite structure set over the people. The nationalization of property does not give the people control over economic life; it merely reinforces state power with economic power. The Soviet state took over the means of production and used it to enhance its power, but it left the hierarchical structures of authority intact. The greater part of the public had little or nothing to do with making decisions about their economic life.

### Municipalization

Real public ownership would have to be ownership by the people themselves.

That was precisely what Bookchin proposed as an alternative: a true form of public ownership. The economy is neither privately owned, nor broken up into small collectives, nor nationalized. Rather, it is municipalized—placed under community ownership and control.

Municipalization of the economy means the ownership and management of the economy by the citizens. Property would be expropriated from the possessing classes by the citizens' assemblies and confederations (acting as a dual power) and placed in the hands of the community, to be used for the benefit of all. The citizens would become the collective "owners" of their community's economic resources.

Citizens would formulate and approve economic policy for the community. They would make decisions about economic life regardless of their occupation or their workplace. Those who worked in a factory would participate in formulating policies not only for that factory but for all other factories—and for farms as well. They would participate in this decision-making not as workers, farmers, technicians, engineers, or professionals, but as citizens. Their decision making would be guided not by the needs of a specific enterprise or occupation or trade but by the needs of the community as a whole.

The assemblies would rationally and morally determine levels of need. They would distribute the material means of life so as to fulfill the maxim of early communist movements: "From each according to ability and to each according to need." That way everyone in the community would have access to the means of life, regardless of the work he or she was capable of performing.

Moreover, the citizens' assemblies, Bookchin wrote, would consciously ensure that individual enterprises did not compete with one another; instead, all economic entities would be required to adhere to ethical precepts of cooperation and sharing.

Over wider geographical areas, the assemblies would make economic policy decisions through their confederations. The wealth expropriated from the property-owning classes would be redistributed not only within a municipality but among all the municipalities in a region. If one municipality tried to engross itself at the expense of others, its confederates would have the right to prevent it from doing so. A thorough politicization of the economy would thereby extend the moral economy to a broad regional scale.

As Bookchin put it, in a municipalized economy, "The economy ceases to be merely an economy in the strict sense of the word—whether as 'business,' 'market,' capitalist, 'worker-controlled' enterprises. It becomes a truly political economy: the economy of the polis or the commune." It would become a moral economy, guided by rational and ecological standards. An ethos of public responsibility would avoid a wasteful, exclusive, and irresponsible acquisition of goods, as well as ecological destruction and violations of human rights. Classical notions of limit and balance could replace the capitalist imperative to expand and compete in the pursuit of profit. Indeed, the community would value people, not for their levels of production and consumption, but for their positive contributions to community life.



*For more on the municipalized economy, please refer to these sources:*

Murray Bookchin, "Municipalization: Community Ownership of the Economy," *Green Perspectives* 2 (1986)

Murray Bookchin, *The Rise of Urbanization and Decline of Citizenship* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1987), pages 260-65. (This book was later republished under the titles *Urbanization Against Cities* and *Urbanization Without Cities*.)

Janet Biehl, *The Politics of Social Ecology: Libertarian Municipalism* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1998), chapter 12.

## Hamburg conference features scholars & Kurdish activists



Reflections on **Challenging Capitalist Modernity**, Hamburg, Germany

Report by Eleanor Finley

In Kurdish, “roj” means sun. Rojava is the land to the west, where the setting sun of freedom and possibility lays to rest and renew itself. Last week, I spent three days at Hamburg University as part of **Challenging Capitalist Modernity**, a conference hosted by a network of organizations within the Kurdish Freedom Movement. Each evening, the sun shone down brightly through a tall glass wall into the conference lobby. There hundreds of people gathered from all over Europe and the Middle East to share, discuss, and debate ideas for a democratic revolution.



**Challenging Capitalist Modernity** was a dense event, characterized by a very colorful range of speakers. In some ways, it was organized like an ordinary academic conference. University professors and PhD students stood at a podium and read excerpts of their work. Prominent leftist academics such as David Harvey, David Graeber and John Holloway offered their perspectives on Kurdish liberation; Harvey in particular highlighted the importance of Murray Bookchin in shaping these ideas. At one point he quipped about his own entanglements with social ecology, “Murray Bookchin said that the way forward was to bring the best of Marxism and anarchism together. I guess that means David [Graeber] and I have to write a book.”



Yet in other ways, **Challenging Capitalist Modernity** was very unlike a typical academic conference. Throughout the weekend, we received impassioned speeches from PKK and PYD leadership. On the topic of feminism and women's revolution, we were addressed via



Skype by a group of female militia commanders in Rojava. Before and after their address, the audience chanted "Biji berxwedana Kobane!" [Long live the resistance of Kobane!] until it shook the whole room. Conference participants were offered the chance to stay with members of the local Kurdish community. I myself spent my nights drinking tea, discussing politics, and playing with the children among my host family.

The conference offered a chance to glimpse at the rich, new ideas taking shape within the Kurdish Freedom Movement. **Jineology**, for instance, is a concept developed by Ocalan and other Kurdish feminist scholars that signals to the re-interpretation of history through the lens of feminist epistemology. Jineology is connected to a broader field of inquiry Kurdish activists call "the sociology of freedom." This new scholarship promotes rigorous social theory in the pursuit of a free society, rather than disinterested, scientific "objectivity."

Indeed, the meaningful progress Kurdish women have made toward a dialectically-informed feminist revolution is striking. In America, social issues tend to come in and out of fashion. These days, feminism (especially ecofeminism) has fallen out of style as stereotypes and caricatures bare down over the potent, liberatory potential of these perspectives. Women such as Havin Guneser, Asya Abdullah, and Emine Ayna remind us that women (indeed all people who suffer under gender and sex oppression) must cultivate our own sites of intellectual and social power. In Rojava, this takes the tangible form of the women's units, which operate independently from the men's and serve to project women not only from ISIS, but from male supremacy itself.

Each day more and more people are seeing the need for a coherent, historically grounded and utopic vision of a directly-democratic society. Social ecologists have been holding these insights and sharing them for decades. Through the Rojava Revolution, our movement for a socially just, ecological and directly-democratic society is growing and becoming more culturally and intellectually diverse.

## Invisible Hands

By Ryan Salisbury

*My skies are held up by invisible hands,  
whose moderated mayhem keeps our heads in the clouds.*

*My eyes fixated on the sequel to civilization—  
those empty gleanings of our wishes—pass by the present.*

*My vision true enough to let my eyes rest,  
I assure myself I am the shipbuilder, not the deckhand.*

*I pray that Brian's Prayer need not be fulfilled, but*

*I think the flames of reclamation will save more  
than the fuels of a Top Floor will go on to extinguish.*

*And I see that a world of bands would do, too,  
but there would be no need were ours realized.*

*My earth is kept flat by a reserve army of boots,  
whose passions are but nebulae shedding singularities.*

*My hands caught in the belly of some horrible machine,  
out of reach of the keys to the shackles that hold them in there.*

*My ears filled with spectacles and billboards,  
though bleeding, they listen for the hearts still beating.*

*I don't have illusions of a god computer being near, and  
I think even were our machine messiah to arrive on earth,  
the interests of a god would not involve our salvation.*

*And I get that a world of machine-apes would do, too,  
but if techno-Ooo does not ensue, what d'you do in lieu?*

*My skies are held up by invisible hands,  
as if replacing Heaven weren't crazy enough, invisible fucking  
hands!*

*My mind stuck on some hare-brained plan,  
if it was only airtight... but of course then we would choke.*

*My soul worn enough to be showing its cracks,  
it heaves and casts words in hopes of a tangible manifestation.*

*I will keep hoping that our buildings don't topple,  
but I'd be happy to meet you in the wreckage,  
and pile it up to space to tear off the visible arms.*

*And I know that a world of objects would do, too,  
but then who would our souls have left to talk to?*

