Introduction

Our schooling, I suspect, leaves a similar image embedded on our memory: a vague blur, a time when we ‘took’ various subjects (possibly have some paper somewhere to prove it) and met a large number of people who have now gone their different ways. But I think most of us also will have a few of those clearer mental snapshots where some real lore was passed on.

I have several but one is, I suppose, based on a lie. I was at primary school and our teacher had bought one of those ‘projects’ from the BBC (or some such) all about Columbus and the ‘discovery’ of ‘America’. I don’t know why I remember but we were told that during the voyage from Europe Columbus, not really knowing exactly where he was going, travelled along that neat border between the sane and the mad and he conceived of the world as being ‘pear-shaped’ with the ‘top’ being the source of all the rivers of the planet. Nonsense, apparently. But I remember this.

Like Columbus we all picture the world to ourselves in different ways. Now I said Columbus’s was erroneous. It was – except for him. But I am not sure if it was any better or any worse than that other map we were taught that is all part of the certifiable blur I mentioned.

I am sure you also can remember it. It was the Mercator map which has raised controversy in recent years. The problem of course was to transpose a three-dimensional object onto a two-dimensional plane. Choices had to be made. The overall result comes over as a map which favours the Northern hemisphere. To give one example Greenland in the North is depicted as being larger than China whilst the latter is in fact about four times bigger than the former.

To counter this anomaly a German, Arno Peters, flattened things out a little and came up with another map which has been described as making the old Mercator map look like an overstretched jumper hanging on a washing line.

Is this any fairer? The New Internationalist calls the Peters map “the most accurate possible” map for our day. Perhaps. Their choice. But what was the map for yesterday? Columbus’s pear will have served him well. During the cold war, apparently, the top military brass on both sides favoured a map of the world looking down on the North Pole. From this view the opposition between the two blocks is stark – leaving out Europe as a kind of cushion in the middle. If an
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intercontinental-ballistic confrontation had broken out this would have been its theatre and perhaps Europe, though affected, wouldn’t have entered the button pushers’ mind so much.

At the end of the day for me a map is not useful because it is true but it is true because it is useful. We bring our own image with us to a degree. I see China today and The Americas as less the monolithic Empires others see but which certainly have a core from which a kind of semiotic pulse vibrates. The core of the Americas is clearly the USA/North America where yesterday’s ‘manifest destiny’ has become today’s ‘Microsoft/Disney’. China’s core, Hong Kong, is destined to become, perhaps, the Asian mirror image. For anarchists these cores represent black holes: areas where gravity implodes to the point where action/movement is off the agenda. Our interests lie away from the core in the periphery. Perhaps we look more to areas like Chiapas and Xinjiang province for a lead to the future.

We do this in our sister paper Freedom but here we are happy to look at other aspects of these entities. There were topics we would like to have seen covered (perhaps a more historic piece on China) but in the end, as always, it is our contributors who provide their own maps. We hope you will enjoy them and allow them to enrich your own.

Neil Birrell

Excerpts from speech by Bill Clinton to San Diego graduates

Today we celebrate your achievements at a truly golden moment for America. The cold war is over, the arms budget remains unimaginably high, NATO is mushrooming, and freedom is ascendant around the globe, with more than half the people of the world living under governments of America’s choosing. Our economy is the healthiest in a generation. There is a Guinness record boom in prison construction. Concentration of wealth in the hands of a few has attained unprecedented intensity, and our social problems – such as homeless people badgering playgoers out to see Rent – will surely bend under the latest round of hellish and draconian legislation.

Of course, there are still challenges for you out there. Beyond our borders we must battle terrorism, which takes an unspeakable toll. One Oakland statistician estimates that for every nine hundred thousand lives lost to malnutrition, smoking, preventable disease, pollution, and mis-allocation of resources, fully one is lost to terrorism.

Here at home, we must continue to fight the scourge of drugs which is daily exacerbated by the wily machinations of our intelligence community and its collegial banker-launderers.

But I believe the greatest challenge we face among all those that Coleen talked about is the problem of race. Can we become one America in the twenty-first century?

I know, and I’ve said before, that there is nothing material or practical I can do to further race relations. You may think that what is needed is an abundance of decent jobs, so that anger and frustration over unemployment cannot be channelled towards one group or another. Believe me, I have had many cards and letters from well-meaning people, people like yourselves, asking that I make good on Congressional pledges of full employment – pledges that were made decades ago, and which lay as empty and neglected as the peace dividend.
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Well, as you and I also know, our business leaders would be very, very, upset with me if I tried to honour that pledge. If you’ve been reading the papers, you are aware that the slightest decrease in unemployment rates is usually enough to send financial markets into a plunge and a tizzy. Heck, if there was a decent job for everyone that wanted one, the pressure to pay a living wage, even to food workers, would be irresistible. And if that happened, how would our business elites compete with their counterparts in other lands, where leaders are even now telling young graduates what I’m telling you? Surely, you don’t expect me to dictate to businessmen what’s best for America.

No, my friends, the answer to the problem of race relations cannot come from full employment, or anything else tangible. It must come solely from the human spirit. I and my colleagues have conditioned our spirits to see the problem as one of attitude, or as one of better education. We say this unashamedly, even though there are millions of college graduates like yourselves who feel lucky to land any miserable job, even a temporary one, where they get barked at by a bezero with a Napoleon complex for a few bucks an hour and no benefits. I rely on you to use your spirit to adapt to this reality, and be thankful for it. It’s a small price to pay for living in the greatest country on the face of the earth.

After all, if we were to set the table to accommodate everyone, then those who have hoarded so much of the food would have to thin their grotesquely-overstocked larders. Is that really an America you would like to see?

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**Hsi Hsuan-Wou**

**Letter to a Chinese Dissident**

After the Tiananmen Square massacre in June 1989 Hsi Hsuan-Wou sent the following letter to a friend involved in the underground opposition to warn him against the democratic mirage he seemed to be succumbing to.

Dear Min-tchou,

Here in Paris I have been following recent events in China and the tragic outcome at Tiananmen Square and I wanted to send you some thoughts I have had.

You call for democracy? But what is hidden behind that magic word? In effect, for you it is a big party where all sorts of demands are bundled together: the end of totalitarianism and corruption, the setting up of a system of law, democratic institutions with formal freedoms (those of association, the press, movement) and all the while remembering to strike a patriotic note: save China!

I believe in fact that your democratic demands mark you out as having a fascination for the west whose institutions, applied to China like a plaster cast, would bring the same advantages as we are deemed to enjoy. But do you think you can reap the benefits of our world without its drawbacks? You want democracy? Can’t you see that you are making the same demands as the western ruling class: free trade and a police force which is soft enough to avoid the gaze of Amnesty International whilst still able to keep order in the factories and on the streets?

Can’t you see what your democratic cousins in the east have got themselves? A return of the worst of the old ways: nationalism, the clergy and the emperor’s entourage. You want to ‘Save China’? Do you think that China can save herself alone? The destiny of China and the west are, henceforth, inextricably interlinked.

How will you save China without bringing about a radical transformation in Chinese society, including among her eight hundred million peasants and at the same time leave the world order untouched? Chinese democrats – who are so prominent these days – dream of no more than a society which is simply present society
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reformed. They dream of a society with bureaucrats, but honest ones; with jobs, but with well-paid ones; with a police force, but not a brutal one; with a system of justice, but a fair one, etc. Deep down they dream of their role as honest bureaucrat in this society. They are the guaranteed replacements of the current ageing elite by virtue of their modern, efficient vision. They forget how much power corrupts and that, although honest today, tomorrow they will be as corrupt as their father were. They forget that Deng Xiaoping was a courageous revolutionary at the age of twenty, by forty he was champion of a bureaucratic hungry for power and that at eighty he had become a bloody tyrant happy to use tanks to protect his throne, as you have just seen.

Whichever way you turn, today's democratic thrust shows under the banner of reform the triumph of the most contradictory of ideas. It shows that revolution, that social dance, that flame which embraces the body and enlightens the mind when the content of life changes, remains tragically absent from the world's surface. If you are calling on this flame don't call it democracy. To call for democracy in China or elsewhere is to give support to the democratic west at a time when their words have been drained of meaning. Good bureaucrats, like yourself, out of ignorance or naiveté, forget to criticise western democracy and simply give their support to the new layer of bureaucrats which, under the vague blanket of liberalising politics, is actually preparing a fresh attack. By doing this you are at the mercy of any future efficient and cynical regime which, once in control of the reins of power, will not forget to thank you with customary brutality.

My dear friend, you want parliamentary democracy, a multi-state, freedom of the press, freedom of association, etc., without changing the actual system of exploitation. Don’t you thereby simply seek to legitimise exploitation? Don’t you decry the old bosses only to praise the new ones? Fascinated by progress, do you refuse to see that this progress is in the process of destroying the planet? How can you believe that technology is going to solve China’s problems when we see it more as an instrument of surveillance and control?

In a study published last year the World Bank expressed concern that China's productivity levels were the lowest in the world. Well, not one of your democrats at Tiananmen Square was able to applaud this. Me, I would have shouted aloud 'Long live the Chinese workers, the worst workers of the world! Well done, comrades, the more productivity you lose in your factories the more human activity evades the world of work'. Instead what do we hear? The managers of the big state factories, until now so proud of near full employment produced by the bureaucratic system, today apologise without shame to their foreign partners about the surplus of workers industry is suffering from. Listen to them moaning 'Our company could operate with a third, a quarter, a fifth of the current workforce. But what would you have us do? We cannot fire everyone because of the social consequences', the hidden message being 'But you can. Please come and carry out this noble task on our behalf'. Some even call on the management of overseas mixed capital companies to come and take up positions on the board of directors so they can do the dirty work.

Some of your democrat friends, the more lucid ones, criticise the most backward aspects of Chinese society. Among these we find the idea of the 'civil state', the sadly famous kou-k'o which, by fixing at birth in tablets of stone the place and category of social origin (that of the parents) sentence people to life imprisonment, forbidding all social mobility and thus freezing Chinese society at the stage it reached in the 1940s. This practice, coming close to serfdom, is without doubt one of the more typical aspects of China which are so fundamentally feudal.

Mao wrote such lies and rubbish about China that we end up taking formulae, like 'half-feudal, half-capitalist', by which he referred to the society he claimed to have replaced, with a sizeable pinch of salt. With regard to the term 'feudal', it is indeed applicable as long as it is applied not to the society he abolished but rather to the one he founded. As for colonial, if one bases one's judgement on the experience of the last ten years during which part of the bureaucracy had transformed itself into a layer of buyers in the pay of overseas capital, we might say it is simply dormant.

To try and graft a pseudo-democratic regime on to such a society can only result, at best, in the creation of a regime along the lines of Singapore, Hong Kong, Korea or Taiwan, i.e. an authoritarian power charged with managing labour and ready to drown in blood any hint of opposition. But the dream of setting up some kind of western style democracy is fool's gold par excellence. Judicial guarantees (unreliable for workers) and economic ones (even more unreliable during periods of reconstruction) are not possible because the west continues to plunder poor countries. The shaky freedoms and appearance of well-being which the workers are supposed to enjoy are always subject to brutal revision when the established order is faced with the slightest challenge and are only possible on condition that
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the west continues to pump resources from the third world and exploit its cheap labour. For the rich countries to set up with a wave of a magic wand a western type of democracy in China would mean cutting the ground from under its own feet.

The 'democracy' you are calling for, and along with you the urban middle classes, is therefore doubly illusory. Illusory happiness (we all know about this one) and impossible happiness (the west is not prepared to stop exploiting you). Thus you must admit that it is no more than a big dream relayed with unanimity by the planet's media. By succumbing to this illusion the Chinese urban masses show they have started to modernise. Before becoming rapid consumers - over here this consumerism is guaranteed less and less and becoming ever more expensive - they are already consumers of the spectacle.

You are worried about the well-being of the Chinese people. Well, tell them from me that the western poor are killing themselves with drugs (narcotics, alcohol or prescribed medication, according to age and income) and the proportion who lose their marbles goes up in tandem with the modernisation of democracy. So, do you hope to avoid this slippery slope? Come off it! The squeaky-clean democracy you see on your television with its fair elections, upright politicians, good salaries and high entertainment consumption has no more reality than the 'communist happiness' promised to you by your bureaucrats for the last forty years. So are you going to step in line and swell the ranks of image consumers?

Workers of China, renounce 'progress' before she devours you. Your masters, blinded by our technology, trumpet the marvels of science as a remedy to all ills. But how can this be true if it enslaves us a little more each day? When our own masters no longer believe in it themselves? When it becomes a machine which, out of control, is steadily destroying the planet?

But, you will tell me, your cities are nearly clean. London has less smog and there are fish in the Seine. It's easily said. In fact it is only because at the same time the likes of Canton and Shanghai have become air-free hells and the rivers turned into open sewers.

To end, let me tell you that demands for democracy simply let the general confusion grow. The western democracies have an overriding interest in pretending to recognise themselves in those far-off movements for change like the one you have just seen. This reinforces the idea that they are desirable. The fact that in Burma, the Philippines and China human beings are ready to die for this hologram gives weight to the idea that democracy is the only wealth possible, that democracy is the El Dorado without limitation. Since defeating Nazism, this 'end of history' that democracy proclaims is no more than the best it can oppose to totalitarianism.

If you can find no other word for 'freedom' in China then carry on calling yourself a democrat, but be sure to be a democrat who calls for fundamental change not only in the third world but also in the rich countries. Without this emphasis, your democratic pretensions only put another stone in the totalitarian edifice which is extending its domination of the planet ... without this emphasis democracy stinks just as much as the system you are fighting.

Apart from that, how's your kid? Growing up? Tell me your news and send my regards to your brother.

Hsi Hsuan-Wou
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### FACT FILES: THE AMERICAS

#### BRAZIL
- Population: 159.1 million
- Population per sq km: 19
- Human development index: 80
- Average inflation 1988-93: 1.0235%
- Main export destination: EU (23.8%)
- Foreign debt: 27.9 (as % of GDP)
- Cost of living: September 1994 95 (New York = 100)

#### CANADA
- Population: 29.1 million
- Population per sq km: 3
- Human development index: 95
- Average inflation 1989-95: 3.0%
- Main export destination: USA (81.7%)
- Budget deficit: -$73.79 billion (world ranking: 4)
- Foreign debt: n/a (as % of GDP)
- Cost of living: September 1994 85 (New York = 100)

#### USA
- Population: 260.5 million
- Population per sq km: 28
- Human development index: 94
- Average inflation 1989-95: 3.7%
- Main export destination: Canada (22.9%)
- Budget deficit: -$150.93 billion (world ranking: 1)
- Foreign debt: n/a (as % of GDP)

#### MEXICO
- Population: 91.9 million
- Population per sq km: 48
- Human development index: 84
- Average inflation 1989-95: 19.2%
- Main export destination: USA (84.9%)
- Foreign debt: 35.2 (as % of GDP)
- Cost of living: September 1994 62 (New York = 100)

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Joy Wood

News from the New World

In the 16th November 1996 issue of Freedom an article appeared about Keith McHenry and the San Francisco Food Not Bombs group. The following is a transcript of an interview which was recorded live at the BBC in London on Sunday 3rd November 1996, on the last evening of Keith’s recent European tour. The interviewer was Richard Dallyn and the recording was broadcast on the following Sunday, 10th November, during the regular weekly Dallyn Worldwide programme between 2100 and 2200 hours on BBC Radio 5 Live, the national news and sports station.

**Richard Dallyn:** Handing out soup to the homeless and destitute of San Francisco sounds a harmless benevolent act, but Keith McHenry’s activism has repeatedly involved him in confrontation with the authorities. He was last arrested in June literally for, I quote, “possessing a bagel and oatmeal”. It’s sixteen years since Keith co-founded his volunteer organisation, Food Not Bombs, named in protest against the money spent on defence. The organisation is funded by donations and has become big news in San Francisco because of the large number of volunteers arrested. Keith has just completed a European tour and talked to me about what the group stands for now.

**Keith McHenry:** We’ve been going for sixteen years and what we do is we share free vegetarian foods on the streets of about 130 cities (including here in Britain, in Brixton) and in San Francisco we’re most famous for having been arrested over a thousand times for sharing free food to the hungry.

**RD:** Well the authorities don’t like you – you have, as you say, been arrested lots of times. Prison as well?

**KM:** Yes, I’ve spent six months in jail waiting to go to trial for a Three Strikes trial. ‘Three Strikes’ in California is a law where, if you get convicted of three crimes, you can do life in prison without possibility of parole.

**RD:** Why do you stand on the streets, then, giving out help to the homeless? Surely there is enough provided anyway through the proper means?
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RD: Why do you stand on the streets, then, giving out help to the homeless? Surely there is enough provided anyway through the proper means?
KM: Actually there is not. In the United States, for instance in San Francisco itself, the government says that 90,000 San Franciscan residents go without food at least once every month, and towards the end of the month many, many people, that’s when most people go hungry. In the States there’s over three million homeless people and, in the city of San Francisco, of 600,000 residents there are over 20,000 homeless people and only about 2,000 people have beds and most people are forced really to live on the streets and doorways and, at night, when you travel through the city almost every shop has a family in the doorway.

RD: Are you saying, then, that a lot of these people, if they didn’t have the food that you provide for them, they couldn’t get anything?
KM: Right, they would go without food. In fact even with all the food we hand out, and all the other charities – the soup kitchens in the rest of the city that hand out – there are many, many people that go hungry. So our goal isn’t really actually just to feed people, it’s really to advocate in behalf of the civil rights of the homeless. For instance, Amnesty International has come to our aid because of our arrests – because it is a human rights’ violation to attack people for their political point of view – and the United Nations Human Rights Commission has also come to our aid and has declared homeless people in the United States political refugees.

RD: But why do you get arrested? Because, all right, they might regard you as a pest, a nuisance, but are you actually breaking the law standing outside giving soup to those who haven’t food?
KM: It’s not really clear whether we’re really breaking the law. That’s possibly why only one person has gone to trial in over a thousand arrests. He was convicted, and coincidentally he was one of the few people who was not videotaped sharing free food, so a videotape wasn’t allowed to be evidence in the case because none existed. But he was charged, sentenced to sixty days in jail and spent 27 days in jail, and it was not really clear whether it’s legal or illegal, but presumably it is.

RD: All right, they say it is, but you presumably can appeal against it if there is some doubt about the legality of the whole thing?
KM: Well, we’ve been appealing and appealing and appealing and the judges have not been really all that definitive – all the way up to the Supreme Court of California, actually – and we’ve been in court in the Federal Courts. And, in one case, some Federal Supreme Court

rules that we could do basically what we were doing but the police said they didn’t really care, they were going to ignore the authority of the Supreme Court of the United States.

RD: In a way, are you a public nuisance? Is that the case? I mean, you’re causing an affair ... I don’t know ... you’re causing some kind of public disorder, is that why they don’t like you?
KM: No. The police say, and the government says, that they don’t care that we’re sharing free food – it’s that we have a political message and they’re not going to allow that. And we do – our message is that society actually could provide for everybody and our message is very clear, so that when you see Food Not Bombs on the streets we have piles of food on both sides of our table, plus we are giving away food to all these people.

RD: But there must be a bit more than just saying ‘Society could provide’? Is there, I mean, for want of a better term – and there’s certainly been a lot of witch-hunts in the past in America – are you Communists?
KM: Well, no ...

RD: ... putting it simply, as Americans might see it, in that simple way?
KM: No. No, it’s that we’re saying that in the United States ...

RD: ... well, are you trying to overthrow the system in some way?
KM: Well, we’re certainly challenging capitalism ...

RD: Right!
KM: ... the whole idea of capitalism. Now we’re not a political party, we’re not affiliated with any church or political party, but we are saying that we’re basically a group of volunteers that have a message which is that we spent over fifty cents of every US dollar – of US tax dollars that the public pays out – in the military. So there’s 275 billion dollars spent by US taxpayers last year on war. In San Francisco people are going hungry, and in New York, and in fact all over the United States, people are going hungry, do not have adequate education or healthcare, do not have adequate ability to just even make their own way as far as rent and foods.

RD: Keith McHenry and his organisation Food Not Bombs. Well, this is ‘Dailym Worldwide’.

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A Chinese ‘Floating Worker’

Tseng Fan-Kouo, who we met one afternoon in Lou Hsun Park in Shanghai, began by telling us how he washed up in a bistro in his area of town and slept in the kitchens. A former peasant who had become a floating worker he wouldn’t tell us how he had ended up in Shanghai. After a few questions he launched into a breathless monologue as though he was frightened he wouldn’t have time to say it all. Then, with his parting phrase, he ran off without even saying goodbye.

**Hsi Hsuan-Wou: Has it been long since you left the country?**
**Tseng Fan-Kouo: More than a decade. But it feels like a century.**

**Hsi Hsuan-Wou: How did it happen? Did you decide to go?**
**Tseng Fan-Kouo: It’s hard to say in retrospect. As always there were personal and more general reasons. In my village suddenly some families were able to have land and to retain some of their produce and this caused great divisions amongst the peasantry. Some of us, like myself, soon found ourselves excluded. In theory any family had a claim to an allocation as soon as they had enough hands to work it and in such a way as to produce what the state demanded. In actual fact the die was cast from the off. It was those families in the villages, who already had some power, who were given the confidence of the party and who were given land rights. After two or three years some families had enriched themselves and had some money to take on workers. So the choice I had was to sign up with one of these farms with the risk of vegetating for the rest of my days, never having the money to get married etc. or to get the hell out.**

I had already been to the main local town a few times and, as with all those of my age, I was much taken by the crowd, the noise, the music, the shop windows. When I think back now, after having seen some of the biggest cities in China, it was as nothing: the main road wasn’t even tarmacked, a dozen or so shops ... but for a young man who had seen nothing but his village it was paradise. Don’t forget that these Chinese villages were just emerging from the middle ages. The
FACT FILES: CHINAS

CHINA
- Population: 1,190.9 million
- Population per sq km: 127
- Human development index: 59
- Average inflation 1989-95: 10.8%
- Main export destination: Hong Kong* (26.8%)
- Foreign debt: 19.3 (as % of GDP)
- Cost of living: September 1994: 104 (New York = 100)
(naught under Chinese control)

HONG KONG
- Population: 5.8 million
- Population per sq km: 6,412
- Human development index: 91
- Average inflation 1989-95: 9.4%
- Main export destination: (Mainland) China (32.0%)
- Foreign debt: 13.2 (as % of GDP)
- Cost of living: September 1994: 120 (New York = 100)

TAIWAN
- Population: 21.1 million
- Population per sq km: 587
- Human development index: No data
- Average inflation 1989-95: 33.9%
- Main export destination: United States (26.2%)
- Foreign debt: 4.5 (as % of GDP)
- Cost of living: September 1994: 113 (New York = 100)

SINGAPORE
- Population: 2.8 million
- Population per sq km: 6,608
- Human development index: 88
- Average inflation 1989-95: 2.7%
- Main export destination: United States (19.1%)
- Foreign debt: 10 (as % of GDP)
- Cost of living: September 1994: 117 (New York = 100)

Hsi Hsuan-Wou

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Tseng Fan-Kouo, who we met one afternoon in Lou Hsun Park in Shanghai, began by telling us how he washed up in a bistro in his area of town and slept in the kitchens. A former peasant who had become a floating worker he wouldn't tell us how he had ended up in Shanghai. After a few questions he launched into a breathless monologue as though he was frightened he wouldn't have time to say it all. Then, with his parting phrase, he ran off without even saying goodbye.

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only outside link was the radio, a travelling cinema once a month and that happy elite that went off for military service and came back full of stories ... as long as they hadn’t gone to Vietnam and come back crippled for life.

Thinking about it I reckon what changed all that was the arrival of money. Before there hadn’t been any. People clocked up work points which brought in food. And a lot of points were needed if you wanted money to get settled and build a home. In short the introduction of money shook up the older ways of relating to folk. And in a country where 80% are peasants to shake up these structures is to shake up the whole of Chinese society.

Hsi Hsuan-Wou: But when you left you had no guarantee of finding work?
Tseng Fan-Kouo: At those kinds of moments you don’t think too hard. You’re young – willing to take a risk or two. Then there are always the rumours. Building sites in the big cities where in a year you could earn what you could earn in a lifetime in the village. The stories which come back are those rarities who did come back a few years later with a fortune in their pockets, who buy a lorry, set up a factory and take on some hands. Stories of those who missed the boat, vegetated or died you hear none of. You want to believe in the miracle so you set off full of dreams.

Hsi Hsuan-Wou: And the results?
Tseng Fan-Kouo: The hangover do you mean? Depends. To start with I wasn’t too far from the village and came back twice a year. I had money. I gave it to my family.

Hsi Hsuan-Wou: What work were you doing?
Tseng Fan-Kouo: Manual stuff. I worked on a dam then roads and bridges. It was hard but you earned a fair wage. Then I wanted to spread my wings a little. Head for the coast. I got on a ship in Canton in 1985. The town was chaotic ring-roads, interchanges, fly-overs. That was how they hoped to deal with the traffic problem. In fact they totally screwed up what had been a pretty town – particularly the centre. The area around Pearl River which had been a pleasant place to walk was turned into a motorway nightmare. Traffic was disrupted for months to allow for the construction of these monsters and it didn’t help a jot. At times all those new routes are saturated, there is constant noise and pollution levels are amongst the highest in the world. Finally, today, they have come up with a solution: the underground. The outcome: more years of building and congestion without mentioning all those roads built in the last ten years which will have to be destroyed to make way for the new project. The Cantonese are incensed by this mess, this waste of money. I heard the same thing happened in Hong Kong. For years there were roads all over the place before they decided to build an underground.

Hsi Hsuan-Wou: It’s as though there is only one version of capitalist development with the same mistakes repeated over and over again never learning from the past. The Chinese ruling class despite its idiosyncrasies remains fascinated by the west. It says to itself, ‘If the west do it it is fine, good. It’s modern. Let’s do likewise’. It refuses to see the problems it has caused in the west. In fact it is the flunkey of Western capitalism. But let’s get back to where you were ...

Tseng Fan-Kouo: Yes. I let myself follow it all. I got to Canton when the building industry was booming. And the least you could say is there was loads of work. You moved from one site to another and met up with other folk from back home. Someone would know a site manager who would pull strings and get you a job. We worked long hours. The money, higher than in the inland towns, wasn’t great but it was worth the effort.

Hsi Hsuan-Wou: How do you mean?
Tseng Fan-Kouo: People have different motives. I have mine even if they are quite common. Let’s say that to start with I carried on looking at the town through a peasant’s eyes. My links were still to the country. I made my way, took care of my money and was willing to work extra hours. I was able to put some to one side. One day in the not too distant future I would head for home with money in my pocket. I’d get a tractor, a 4x4, build, get married, settle down, I don’t know. Everything was still vague but I would do better than my dad, wouldn’t be taken for a ride, would have my own business ... get by. And then there’s the effect the city has on you. When you have never seen it before it grabs you by the scruff of the neck – all the people, the cars, loads of products. It’s like being able to shake hands with all the people you’ve ever seen on the TV but who were meaningless until you met them in the flesh. After years spent watching the miracle you feel you are stepping behind the screen for the first time.

Hsi Hsuan-Wou: How long did all this last?
Tseng Fan-Kouo: Two years at the most. Round about 1986/87 things started to get a little tougher. I don’t know how it all started. Some put it down to folk like me. Too many coming in to saturate
only outside link was the radio, a travelling cinema once a month and that happy elite that went off for military service and came back full of stories ... as long as they hadn’t gone to Vietnam and come back crippled for life.

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the job market. The employers used it as an excuse to be more arrogant, cut wages, extend hours. Discipline on the sites was toughened up. Folk were no longer allowed into town after work, no doubt because we looked a mess. It might upset the tourists. It has to be said that preferring to save a little we didn't spend much money on clothes. To be sure we were still peasants - a little wild. Townies started to give us a dirty look. Some lads who couldn't find work started to play around. On the sites there were more and more fights. The police were called in for any little thing and they weren't putting the gloves on. Then there was the first riot. That was the day I started seeing things in a different light.

Since we were so far from home and the girls we knew there and since we only went back about once a year the site manager started bringing prostitutes in. At the time we were shacked up in army tents on the construction sites. The girl would come into our tent and we would climb on top of her in turn. I didn't like it much but did like my mates. They were always poor girls from the county - like us. Little girls who had been promised work and who ended up doing this in order to build the bank balance of some greedy bastard - a party big-wig by day and a pimp by night or vice versa ... and then one day who comes into the tent? A girl who was a little older than the rest, already worn out. The lads started to laugh, what's this old bag doing here? Well the girl hit back which was when I recognised her. The site manager was about to give her a few slaps when I intervened. There was a fight. The site manager ended up on the floor. I was in the shit. But I couldn't have held myself back. She was a girl from back home. The next farm. I'd seen her around. I might have married her if I'd had more money. She was in the same boat as me. There she was ten years later. She thanked me for helping her, then left ... I never saw her again. The boss wanted to dock a months salary. He managed to sort things out with the pimp and still got his commission.

Well from then on things were never the same. Having seen the girl I had seen myself: a beast of burden that is used and then thrown away when no longer needed. I became wary, introspective. I hardened up a bit which is perhaps why I am still here today.

**Hsi Hsuan-Wou: How did you get back home?**

**Tseng Fan-Kouo:** That was what I wanted to do. I'd had my fill of that lifestyle. Never mind fortune. Better go home. I missed my family, the hills, the woods, the very land. People in towns don't understand how we love the land. And if you are going to die you might as well do it at home. But fate had other plans. After a stay back home it was the town I began to miss. I had changed even if I hadn't realised it at the time. In short I decided to head back for the town.

**Hsi Hsuan-Wou: Still Canton?**

**Tseng Fan-Kouo:** Yes. Well nearly. Tchou-Hai, the Special Economic Zone next to Macao. Along with Shenzhen the Special Economic Zone which borders Hong Kong. It was without doubt one of the biggest of the Chinese development areas. There were cranes everywhere, rivers of concrete and migrants coming from all over China. There was talk of 50m people who had left the country and were floating from town to town looking for work. Today I imagine the figure is three or four times that.

Again I managed to find the team of pals from back home, those I'd been with when the girl incident happened. Since I'd dealt with the site manager in good style I was very welcome. I was taken on board and made second in command. I earned more, always hoping to get rich ... And then, a little later, I met a girl, a migrant like me who had worked for a few years in the electronics factory and who, unable to hack it any longer, got herself a skivvy job in management.

At the time we were always on the move. Hardly was one job done than we were on to the next. It was hard especially in winter.

**Hsi Hsuan-Wou: When it was too cold didn't you get any special clothing?**

**Tseng Fan-Kouo:** Who are you kidding? The rule was that it had to go lower than minus ten. You only got that up North. But we did OK. We kept our shoulder to it and it all went on for years until 1989/90. From that date onwards conditions changed once again. First of all we were asked to do more hours. We were knackered, there were accidents all the time. You wondered if they weren't doing it on purpose to finish with it all.

**Hsi Hsuan-Wou: Were the employers Chinese enterprises?**

**Tseng Fan-Kouo:** Well, officially yes. But we only met the middleman. Above them were big financial interests foreign sometimes but above all Hong Kong and Macao. And I think that was the start of it all ...

**Hsi Hsuan-Wou: The start of what?**

**Tseng Fan-Kouo:** Wait a moment. What I want to say is that the pressures on the workers are becoming harder and harder. First the
the job market. The employers used it as an excuse to be more arrogant, cut wages, extend hours. Discipline on the sites was toughened up. Folk were no longer allowed into town after work, no doubt because we looked a mess. It might upset the tourists. It has to be said that preferring to save a little we didn't spend much money on clothes. To be sure we were still peasants - a little wild. Townies started to give us a dirty look. Some lads who couldn't find work started to play around. On the sites there were more and more fights. The police were called in for any little thing and they weren't putting the gloves on. Then there was the first riot. That was the day I started seeing things in a different light.

Since we were so far from home and the girls we knew there and since we only went back about once a year the site manager started bringing prostitutes in. At the time we were shacked up in army tents on the construction sites. The girl would come into our tent and we would climb on top of her in turn. I didn't like it much but did like my mates. They were always poor girls from the country - like us. Little girls who had been promised work and who ended up doing this in order to build the bank balance of some greedy bastard - a party big-wig by day and a pimp by night or vice versa ... and then one day who comes into the tent? A girl who was a little older than the rest, already worn out. The lads started to laugh, 'what's this old bag doing here?' Well the girl hit back which was when I recognised her. The site manager was about to give her a few slaps when I intervened. There was a fight. The site manager ended up on the floor. I was in the shit. But I couldn't have held myself back. She was a girl from back home. The next farm. I'd seen her around. I might have married her if I'd had more money. She was in the same boat as me. She was ten years later. She thanked me for helping her, then left ... I never saw her again. The boss wanted to dock a month's salary. He managed to sort things out with the pimp and still got his commission.

Well from then on things were never the same. Having seen the girl I had seen myself: a beast of burden that is used and then thrown away when no longer needed. I became wary, introspective. I hardened up a bit which is perhaps why I am still here today.

Hsi Hsuan-Wou: How did you get back home?
Tseng Fan-Kouo: That was what I wanted to do. I'd had my fill of that lifestyle. Never mind fortune. Better go home. I missed my family, the hills, the woods, the very land. People in towns don't understand how we love the land. And if you are going to die you might as well do it at home. But fate had other plans. After a stay back home it was the town I began to miss. I had changed even if I hadn't realised it at the time. In short I decided to head back for the town.

Hsi Hsuan-Wou: Still Canton?
Tseng Fan-Kouo: Yes. Well nearly. Tchou-Hai, the Special Economic Zone next to Macao. Along with Shenzhen the Special Economic Zone which borders Hong Kong. It was without doubt one of the biggest of the Chinese development areas. There were cranes everywhere, rivers of concrete and migrants coming from all over China. There was talk of 50m people who had left the country and were floating from town to town looking for work. Today I imagine the figure is three or four times that.

Again I managed to find the team of pals from back home, those I'd been with when the girl incident happened. Since I'd dealt with the site manager in good style I was very welcome. I was taken on board and made second in command. I earned more, always hoping to get rich ... And then, a little later, I met a girl, a migrant like me who had worked for a few years in the electronics factory and who, unable to hack it any longer, got herself a skinny job in management.

At the time we were always on the move. Hardly was one job done than we were on to the next. It was hard especially in winter.

Hsi Hsuan-Wou: When it was too cold didn't you get any special clothing?
Tseng Fan-Kouo: Who are you kidding? The rule was that it had to go lower than minus ten. You only get that up North. But we did OK. We kept our shoulder to it and it all went on for years until 1989/90. From that date onwards conditions changed once again. First off we were asked to do more hours. We were knackered, there were accidents all the time. You wondered if they weren't doing it on purpose to finish with it all.

Hsi Hsuan-Wou: Were the employers Chinese enterprises?
Tseng Fan-Kouo: Well, officially yes. But we only met the middleman. Above them were big financial interests foreign sometimes but above all Hong Kong and Macao. And I think that was the start of it all ...

Hsi Hsuan-Wou: The start of what?
Tseng Fan-Kouo: Wait a moment. What I want to say is that the pressures on the workers are becoming harder and harder. First the
hours, then the withholding of salaries for anything at all: housing, training, discipline. The bosses were more and more nery. It was as though they too were under a lot of pressure. And this pressure was coming as a result of pressure to make money, profit for silent partners, that is to say those right at the top, the Chinese capitalists of Hong Kong and Macao. We approached the old unions who were still operating in the state factories but with no joy. We later learnt that there were secret agreements between the foreign investors and the authorities not to allow unions in those companies with mixed capital backing in order to keep salaries as low as possible. In actual fact we were a Chinese company but were indirectly linked to the budget of the mixed companies ... so no union.

That was when we decided to organise ourselves clandestinely in order to put some pressure on the boss even though it was still impossible to act openly until we had enough support for some collective action. However, some resistance slogans started to spread and in this way we succeeded without a word being spoken to slow things down a little. There was also a lot of pilfering. We were stealing material to sell on the black-market to smaller folk. It helped out at the end of the month.

In a nutshell we started to organise ourselves. It wasn't a union but simply the solidarity that was generated that allowed us to feel our strength. The boss was aware that things were not as they had been and that he was having problems getting his way all the time. There was nothing he could put his finger on but he must have sensed the silent resistance we were opposing him with. Changing team leaders, changing teams, trying to play one group off against another, nothing worked. So he decided to turn to straightforward usury. One evening, pay day, we noted that salaries had been cut by 20%. When we pointed this out to the wages clerk he said that the money hadn't been sent to the bank and that we would receive it with a weeks delay. In fact we waited a fortnight. Next we were expected to do an extra hour a day which would be paid when the project was finished. Then, after a series of thefts, the guard at the site was reinforced with a group of night-time watchmen who began to search us morning and night. Hooligans put there especially to intimidate us. The level of tension on the site rose. It only needed a spark to set off the whole thing up in flames.

Eventually it came. A simple dispute with one of the watchmen, a youngster was knocked about, his mates came to help, the watchmen took fright, one of them got out a gun and one of our chaps was injured. Immediately a strike was called with demands for discussions with the management. The company ended up sending a delegate who we sent back with our grievances: stopping hassles, withdrawing the watchmen, honouring back-pay, pay for extra hours and so on. To start with the boss seemed to give way but in fact he was buying time in order to get the support of the authorities. A representative from the manpower agency even came to tell us that our demands were legitimate but that our work stoppage was illegal and demanded we went back to work before negotiations could take place.

When we refused the stakes were upped. The police who were sent to intimidate us were jostled and quickly lost their self-control. Sensing they were losing control of the situation and that it was threatening to snowball the authorities immediately called in more police who wheeled in the heavy guns. Although there were only about a hundred of us they surrounded us with some two or three hundred officers with armoured cars and who opened fire on us on sight. Then they rifle-butted the building site clean. Six were killed and several dozen injured. All those who didn't manage to escape were arrested and put in prison for several months ... that is the cost of taking strike action in China.
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"I never apologise for the United States of America. I don’t care what the facts are."
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"China is the weed in the lettuce patch of humanity. The weed is the Nemesis of human efforts. Of all the imaginary existences that we attribute to plants, animals and stars perhaps it is the weed that leads the wisest life."
Arthur Miller

"... everything of importance that has happened and is happening proceeds by means of the American rhizome."
Gilles Deleuze

"I have heard of letting mankind alone, but not of governing mankind. Letting alone springs from the fear that people will pollute their innate nature and set aside their Te. When people do not pollute their innate nature and set aside their Te then is there the need for the government of mankind?"
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"The Nacirema have an almost pathological horror of and fascination with the mouth... The daily body ritual performed by everyone includes a mouth-rite... It was reported to me that the ritual consists of inserting a small bundle of hog hairs into the mouth, along with certain magical powders, and then moving the bundle in a highly formalised series of gestures."
Horace Miner.

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Karl Young

Cowboys and Indians: the Dumbing Down of American Myths

Prelude

For those who've taken a close and uncensored look, the Americas should seem like a fountain of myths. In writing this I use the word 'myths' not as 'falsehoods'—I'll be dealing with enough of those—but with the kind of stories that inform people's lives in such a way as to guide them by their basic human truth. To the indigenous peoples of the Americas, little held more importance. Anglo-America, the culture of the areas now designated the United States and the English-speaking provinces of Canada, has done its best for centuries to flatten these myths out, to dumb them down, to take their truth from them. The same goes for parts of Latin America, though there are enclaves of living myth there, and even in some parts of the English-speaking Caribbean. In the latter case, the global popularity of Reggae, a music produced by a micro-culture on one island, suggests how much power and range an unbridled mythology can create. Natty Dreadlocks can't be tamed: if you, like Natty, refuse to be a slave, you may develop your skills as a singer or musician to the maximum potential. Such, too, was the case with Natty's cousin in the US, Stappa Lee, who inspired some of the spirit of the Blues and hence its child, Rock 'n' Roll.

A good example of destruction of useful myth comes from the wreckage of a story told generation after generation about George Washington. This story's endless reiteration may find a parallel in the story of King Alfred burning the cakes, told to generations of children in England. The story originated in Parson Weems's popular biography of Washington, but degenerated quickly in standard readers for elementary school children. According to the readers, George's father so detested the telling of lies that he once told his son "rather than see you come to this [lying], dear as you are to me, gladly would I assist to nail you in your little coffin, and follow you to your grave". Young George cut down a cherry tree, and when his father asked him what had happened to the tree, the tearful boy gave him a
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hatchet, saying, "I did it, father, for I cannot tell a lie". George's father was so pleased with his son's truthfulness that he did not punish him. Apparently generations of textbook writers and teachers thought this story would teach children to be honest, though when it comes to lying, recent repeaters of the story removed the bit about nailing children in coffins — if they had been brought up on this reader, it certainly hadn't kept them from falsifying the story, whether to fit it out in the Victorian cult of death, or revamping it for a time when frequent spanking was fashionable.

Weems based his story on the following incidents. When asked if telling lies was evil, George's father told his son that as a child he was bound to make mistakes, but should discuss them with his father, and have no fear of doing so, for he would never put him in a position where he had no choice but to tell lies. When the boy did something that might be wrong, he should "never tell a falsehood to conceal it; but come bravely up like a little man, and tell me of it and, instead of beating you, George, I will but the more honour and love you for it". After George's father asked George about the tree, he made good his promise by congratulating his son on his honesty, rather than whipping him for cutting down the tree.

This story is something like a parenting manual in brief. It probably tells us something about Washington's strengths as a grown man, particularly his ability to generate trust, the first thing a revolutionary general needs. The suppression (or repression) of the cherry tree story and many like it may tell us a great deal about the problems of Euro-Americans. We go to considerable trouble to destroy or disfigure those stories of our own that we should remember most. We go to considerably more trouble to destroy the stories of the native people's of the Americas, who may have more to tell us than we, in our mindless pursuit of wealth, want to hear, but we should listen. We have a great deal to learn, and although we have chopped down many trees, we may learn to do better.

1. Cowboys

As the two men wearing broad-brimmed hats approach each other on the dusty street, the terrified townspeople race across the wooden sidewalks into doorways, or duck behind watering troughs. When the steely-eyed men have come to within a half dozen meters of each other they halt, and wait a suspenseful moment for the first to make a move for his six-gun. They shoot at roughly the same time. One falls.

Next scene: The hero, a strong, Aryan-looking man who seemed to come from nowhere, who has saved the town (though sustaining a 'lesh-wound' to the shoulder and has his arm in a sling), climbs onto a buckboard with the beautiful daughter of a man whose ranch he saved, and rides off into the sunset.

So goes the climax and denouement of one of the most often repeated myths of the western United States. It was played out over and over again on Hollywood lots for low budget television and movie extravaganzas alike. The strange thing about it is that it didn't happen anywhere else.

Those phallic pistols held audience attention, but it was extremely difficult to hit anything at more than a couple meters distance when shooting one from the hip. In fact, those guns were primarily used as mechanically enhanced daggers at close quarters, often no more than the distance from one side of a poker table to another. One 'gunslinger' turned what was sometimes considered a stigma into an advantage. He was left handed, and all his gunfights began with a handshake that prevented his opponent from going for his gun, while he quite naturally shot him using his left hand. Although six-guns could be more carefully aimed from other positions, their main advantages was portability - there seem to have been some psychological advantages, too. Still, Rifles were the weapons used most often for serious fighting, and notorious outlaws generally put the most notches in their belts while fighting with a rifle in a private army belonging to a rancher in one of the range wars between competing capitalists.

The most interesting oddity (at least for me) is the cowering townspeople running for cover. If people actually had gunfights at anything but very close range (sword range), they may have had a reason to get out of the way to miss the bullets that would have gone just about everywhere other than where they were aimed. But most of the Anglo-American men in the west in the days of the cowboys had fought in the Civil War, the majority on the Confederate side. This means that they had little fear of guns, and knew how to take care of themselves. After fighting barefoot, eating only every other day, and still being able to charge against walls of Union troops, equipped with the latest in rifles, Gatling-guns, and cannon, as was common among the southern regiments in the last years of the war, a poseur with a pistol was hardly the sort of man who would inspire fear in them. As a matter of fact, they were pretty good at working alone or together in killing off trouble makers without the help of.
hatchet, saying, "I did it, father, for I cannot tell a lie". George's father was so pleased with his son's truthfulness that he did not punish him. Apparently generations of textbook writers and teachers thought this story would teach children to be honest, though when it comes to lying, recent repeaters of the story removed the bit about nailing children in coffins - if they had been brought up on this reader, it certainly hadn't kept them from falsifying the story, whether to fit it out in the Victorian cult of death, or revamping it for a time when frequent spanking was fashionable.

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sheriffs or courts, which they didn't trust. They might show some deference to a gunman in a tavern, but would have no trouble disarming and executing him later if they perceived him as more than a nuisance. The main thing that got in the way of protecting themselves was the armies of the railroad companies, the banks, and the ranch owners. In many first-hand accounts of bank robberies, townspeople simply stood around to watch, not because they were afraid to intervene, but because they hated the banks almost as much as they hated sheriffs.

Conventions for the portrayal of gunfighters began in the dime novels of the day, and were developed by Hollywood as the movie industry grew. Some of the oddest conventions in the movies were deliberate parodies. Wyatt Earp had been a legendary 'lawman' of his day, running gambling houses, bordello, etc. while robbing people who didn't frequent his businesses, through his offices as sheriff, marshal, etc. As the cowboy era gave way to a new economic order, he tried other ventures, from panning for gold to selling used cars. In his old age, he got a job as an extra in a movie, but couldn't get further work because he didn't act the way movie directors thought a cowboy should. The popular cowboy actor Tom Mix befriended him, partly out of a sense of history, partly because he admired the old man's skill as a horseman. Together the two worked out comic routines for Mix to perform, including the gunfight in which the two men walk toward each other on the emptying street. Mix introduced them into his movies, at first as a joke and a rebuke for the dismissal of his friend. The joke caught on. And it isn't over yet.

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In one of his movies, John Wayne walks through a herd of cattle that peels off before him as though he were Moses parting the Red Sea. Throughout his career, Wayne continued to represent the fearless conqueror, able to tame anything in his path, that is all nature itself, from Indians to forests to deserts to mountains to animals. When not portraying a gunslinger, he embodied the summation of the image of the working cowboy, commanding the whole sweeping landscape and the big sky above it from horseback.

By most human standards, herds of cows aren't very good company. They spend nearly all their time eating grass, breaking the monotony only when spooked. This monotony carried over to the lives of the cowboys who watched over the herds during both pastureage and drives to railheads. Around the fire at night, the literate member of a party might read the same newspaper he'd read for the last month aloud to his companions. With the exception of a few cautionary songs, such as variants of the ubiquitous 'St James Infirmary', most cowboy songs were florid, sentimental ditties, resembling Hallmark card lyrics. Perhaps they reminded the workers of a more genteel life they had known earlier or hoped to achieve in the future. Use of narcotics often relieved some of the boredom, but even the cornucopia of drugs available from itinerant peddlers and the land itself, could only make a dent in the immense tedium of spending day after day watching animals eat grass. Many cowboys bought wool, often from Navaho shepherds, and knitted some of their own clothes while watching the cows. When they had knitted all the socks, shirts, etc. that they could use for the foreseeable future, they knitted other garments that they could sell at the end of the drive for enough money to stay in a bordello a bit longer before heading back to the ranch.

Cowboys tend to be portrayed as aggressive colonisers - and indeed their employers were that with a vengeance - but they themselves were more often trying to escape from something. I've already mentioned Civil War veterans. One of the reasons why the majority were from the Confederacy was the same reason they had fought bitterly and furiously during the war, and why they had lost it. For southern foot soldiers, slavery was not an issue at all. They owned no slaves themselves and would not have fought if their only motive was to guard the wealth of plantation owners and the small number of farmers who owned one or two slaves. Rather, the foot soldiers fought to preserve their lives and their heritage as free farmers, feeling that if they did not, they themselves would become slaves to the factory owners of the north, where they would be turned into little more than machines - to them a fate comparable to that of the slaves they'd heard of but as often as not had never actually seen. One of the main reasons for the victory of the Union forces was precisely that the Confederacy didn't have the industrial backing to keep them supplied through a sustained war. After the war, many felt that the only way to escape the complete debacle of Reconstruction was to go west, where they sometimes were able to lead something like the life they'd had. Watching cows might be boring, but it was better than spending fifteen hours a day in a dingy factory tending a machine that was infinitely more stupid than a cow, only getting a few hours of sunlight and fresh air a week, and losing forever the satisfactions of working their own land, hunting in forests not smothered with soot, and fishing in clear, unpolluted streams and rivers.
sheriffs or courts, which they didn’t trust. They might show some deference to a gunman in a tavern, but would have no trouble disarming and executing him later if they perceived him as more than a nuisance. The main thing that got in the way of protecting themselves was the armies of the railroad companies, the banks, and the ranch owners. In many first-hand accounts of bank robberies, townspeople simply stood around to watch, not because they were afraid to intervene, but because they hated the banks almost as much as they hated sheriffs.

Conventions for the portrayal of gunfighters began in the dime novels of the day, and were developed by Hollywood as the movie industry grew. Some of the oddest conventions in the movies were deliberate parodies. Wyatt Earp had been a legendary ‘lawman’ of his day, running gambling houses, bordellos, etc. while robbing people who didn’t frequent his businesses, through his offices as sheriff, marshal, etc. As the cowboy era gave way to a new economic order, he tried other ventures, from panning for gold to selling used cars. In his old age, he got a job as an extra in a movie, but couldn’t get further work because he didn’t act the way movie directors thought a cowboy should. The popular cowboy actor Tom Mix befriended him, partly out of a sense of history, partly because he admired the old man’s skill as a horseman. Together the two worked out comic routines for Mix to perform, including the gunfight in which the two men walk toward each other on the emptying street. Mix introduced them into his movies, at first as a joke and a rebuke for the dismissal of his friend. The joke caught on. And it isn’t over yet.

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In one of his movies, John Wayne walks through a herd of cattle that peels off before him as though he were Moses parting the Red Sea. Throughout his career, Wayne continued to represent the fearless conqueror, able to tame anything in his path, that is all nature itself, from Indians to forests to deserts to mountains to animals. When not portraying a gunslinger, he embodied the summation of the image of the working cowboy, commanding the whole sweeping landscape and the big sky above it from horseback.

By most human standards, herds of cows aren’t very good company. They spend nearly all their time eating grass, breaking the monotony only when spooked. This monotony carried over to the lives of the cowboys who watched over the herds during both pasturage and drives to railheads. Around the fire at night, the literate member of a party might read the same newspaper he’d read for the last month aloud to his companions. With the exception of a few cautionary songs, such as variants of the ubiquitous ‘St James Infirmary’, most cowboy songs were florid, sentimental ditties, resembling Hallmark card lyrics. Perhaps they reminded the workers of a more genteel life they had known earlier or hoped to achieve in the future. Use of narcotics often relieved some of the boredom, but even the cornucopia of drugs available from itinerant peddlers and the land itself, could only make a dent in the immense tedium of spending day after day watching animals eat grass. Many cowboys bought wool, often from Navaho shepherds, and knitted some of their own clothes while watching the cows. When they had knitted all the socks, shirts, etc. that they could use for the foreseeable future, they knitted other garments that they could sell at the end of the drive for enough money to stay in a bordello a bit longer before heading back to the ranch.

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Southern accents aren’t uncommon in the movies; but you’d have a hard time finding a trace of the large numbers of other immigrants who became cowboys in the decades following the civil war. The major contingent also came from the southern states, but these people had not been members of the Confederate army, but were former slaves. If a black man could free himself from debt-slavery, one of his best bets was to head west. As a cowboy, he wouldn’t have to deal with white people at all for a good deal of the year. Out on the open range, nobody was going to give him trouble on account of his race or former status as a slave. If he was lucky and industrious, he might, in time, be able to free his family from share-cropping in Mississippi or Alabama and move it to one of the all black towns in Kansas or Nebraska. If not, he at least had a better life for himself than he had suffered as a slave and would have to endure as a share-cropper.

Many cowboys came from Europe, where they had been cattlemen in Germany, Poland, Russia, and other countries. Their experience in their places of origin may not have involved a large range, but they brought with them habits that could be adapted fairly easily. The best paid of them were the cattle breeders, who often came simply for better pay. The rest escaped everything from religious and ethnic persecution to legal and family problems they didn’t believe in to simple poverty. Their fear of meeting further prejudice in the eastern US, their uneasiness about learning a new language, and just plain bad luck in the cities and farms where they first tried to adjust to the new world made the west a natural place to go.

Most of the western US had been the northern half of Mexico before it was conquered in the 1840s. Had not the Civil War intervened, there’s a good chance the rest of Mexico would have been taken as well. Many Chicanos call the conquered areas ‘occupied Mexico’ today. In the decades after the Civil War, many cowboys were Mexican. Among other things, this means that their genetic background was often partly Indian, and could include Chinese and African ancestors as well. These people had created the base of cattle culture in the west, and even though they were being dispossessed in this period, virtually all cowboys learned their Indian skills in horsemanship, and their Spanish tradition of cattle management. This is evident in the Spanish vocabulary that the cowboys held in common (whether their standard language was English, Polish, German, Yiddish, or Russian) from the ‘lariet’ used to rope the cattle to the ‘hooscow’ where a cowboy might find himself incarcerated if he won more than his share of card games at a saloon owned by the local sheriff.

If we were to picture a cowboy on the range, he would most likely not resemble John Wayne. He would just as likely be a black man, intermittently singing a song in Gullah or Gichi or one of the other slave languages and gigging from the snorts of jimson weed he’d traded for some opium with a fellow who might have been Indian or might have been Mexican or might have been Chinese – he wasn’t sure – and intently knitting booties and antimacassars while watching the cows at their endless task of consuming grass through an elaborate system of four stomachs.

* * *

The mythic cowboy served different functions in different periods. The first to appear in dime novels served three purposes: to bring some glamour and adventure into the dull lives of those who lived in the grey cities of the east; to attract new workers not only to the cattle business, but also to work on railroads and other enterprises of eastern capital; and to help cover up the trauma of the civil war. If Americans who had been killing each other could look west, they might not have to look each other in the face. By taking selected elements of the war and mounting them on a composite figure based in the soldiers of both armies, the myth created a homogeneous and simple model of what an American should be. That this dumbed-down myth was no more than cosmetic should be familiar to most people in the US, where the Civil War still isn’t over, despite the many masks we’ve used to cover the fact that African Americans still are not free, that most of the south’s agrarian way of life has been destroyed, and that even in the north, many local robber barons have been replaced by multinationals creating a form of debt slavery for all races.

As larger and larger numbers of people poured into the US from the end of the Civil War until the Great Depression, ethnic, genetic, and cultural diversity caused endless problems. The quick fix for that grew out of the myth used to cover the Civil War. The mythic cowboy became ever more intensely an icon for the process of eliminating the dark skinned peoples of the Americas, and blending those from Europe into one composite. In mythic terms, this composite was necessary to achieve ‘manifest destiny’ the conquest of the most desirable lands of North America from one ocean to the next. Manifest destiny became more than colonialism of peoples, but an odd sort of imperialism over nature itself, in which raw nature was broken, enslaved, and made to do the will, without question, of the white man on the horse, and the sanitized rancher for whom he
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worked. A man on horseback can look down on the world, as the mythic cowboy looks down with scorn on the natural world he’s crushing under his horse’s hooves. This myth could be propped up by pseudo-religious notions of the earth being there to serve man, curiously avoiding the Bible’s injunction that part of the soul’s sojourn on earth included the responsibilities of stewardship.

For me (a ‘victory baby,’ born immediately after World War Two, the child of parents who met in Europe during the war), the Cold War cowboy becomes utterly sinister. We got our first television when I was about six years old. From then until I left home, the television networks broadcast virtually non-stop Cold War propaganda in cowboy guise. In the wake of World War Two, North Americans cherished the belief that we had won a grizzly war on two fronts because we were right, because we could do no wrong, because we were a chosen people meant to bring truth, justice, and the American way to the world, and to impose it on all peoples. Like the good cowboy who could do no wrong, it was our job to overthrow the freely elected Arbenz government of Guatemala, for instance, because that’s what cowboys did with stinking greasers who didn’t behave. It was our job to civilise the dark skinned races of the world, because we had tamed the west, and because the west had been given to us, not to the Indian, who was simply a stubborn child who needed to be taught the lessons of the white man.

On television, those bad-guys shot in the street were often surrogate Russians, and the shooting a reinforcement of our belief in our rightness in the face of the Red Hordes poised to take away our television. Our virtue assured our victory over the unwashed, heathen Soviets. Perhaps most comic, and most unfortunate, was that victorious pistol shot from the hip. These unstoppable phaluses grown into missiles, and the thing that assured us of perpetual victory over the new Red Man was our ever growing arsenal of larger, more powerful missiles. What was the Cuban Missile Crisis but an example of how the cowboy in the white hat met the bad-guy at high noon and forced him to back down? This bit of applied television mythology meant a disastrous increase in nuclear weapons building on both sides, and could easily have meant the death of literally hundreds of millions of people if the Red Man had not retreated. Toward the end of the cold war, Phyllis Shlafley restated most clearly the doctrine of manifest destiny for the nuclear age: “The bomb must be good, since God gave it to us first”. The other side of the coin was enunciated by Ron Kovic, a soldier who had grown up watching the white myth and

wanting to become part of it, only to become paralysed from a wound sustained in the US-Vietnam War: “I gave my dead dick for John Wayne”.

2. Indians - their white myths

For white people who have not spent much time among Native Americans, Indians really have no myth of their own. Since the time of Columbus, Amer-Indians have been little more than racks on which to hang the latest fashions in storytelling, prop up the latest white myth, support propaganda, etc.

Columbus headed for the fabled and wealthy kingdom of Zipangu, Japan. But the island he landed on seemed nothing like the place he was looking for, so, according to one story, he decided he must have landed in India. Whether or not this story is true, from the first moment of the European invasion of America, the native peoples were thought to be someone else, whose name they’ve been stuck with, with no room for an identity of their own.

A couple decades after Columbus came ashore, the Spanish conquered Mexico. Once more they had to make up an identity for these unfamiliar people. They decided the natives were Jews. The Lost Tribes of Israel, no less. According to one line of the Christianity of the day, the Messiah would not return until ‘the conversion of the Jews’. Since there seemed little hope of converting the Jews of Europe, who had enough integrity to keep their identity no matter how much they were persecuted, the Jews the Bible spoke of must be the Lost Tribes. This notion, first suggested by Columbus himself, lead to a strange farce. Missionary orders started baptising the peoples of central Mexico in groups of hundreds, even thousands, per day. To accomplish this, priests would have people paraded past them and would speak the words of baptism while they splattered them with holy water from a wide paintbrush dipped in a huge bucket. At the height of this activity, competing orders had contests to see which could convert the largest number of ‘Jews’ in a single day. As often in the history of the invasion, some strange eddies circle back on themselves in eerie ways. Columbus’s parents were apparently converted Jews, as seems to have been the case with the parents of Fray Bernardino de Sahagun, one of the first Europeans to make a sincere and admirable attempt to understand the Aztecs on their own terms. An even stranger one comes from such tribes as the Lakota, Serri, and Yaqui, who have kept their identity under the harshest persecution,
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including a holocaust. At the time of Columbus, the indigenous peoples of America had no more relation to Jews than to any other people in the world. Since the invasion began, the persecution of both groups took something like a parallel course.

In the US, Native Americans were seen more as an obstacle or a test. Just before the first major British colonisation of Massachusetts, disease spread up the coast from Virginia, killing off the majority of the people who lived in the coastal region. This was seen by the invaders as a divine mandate. And so it went for centuries: Indians were seen as signposts. If the Almighty or a college of demons was unhappy with the invaders, the Indians were there to show them the error of their ways by beating them. Whenever Indians died in large numbers, that was a token that divine powers were backing the invaders, urging them forward.

After the Eastern Seaboard was settled and more or less stabilised, the Indians became an incarnation of the essential unruliness of nature, something to civilise, subdue, or exterminate. Each of these lead to a hellish strand of history, and each strand seemed eventually to wind back not only onto the others, but to ever more fiendish warping of society, sometimes in other parts of the world. Civilising Indians meant self-righteously depriving them of their beliefs, their languages, and any other characteristics that made what they were. This often included attempts at the breaking up of clan systems, and the tortures of Indian Schools, where children could be forced to stand with bars of blister-causing lye soap in their mouths or having their heads submerged repeatedly in full toilets for speaking their own language. Pacifying them meant putting them on reservations and depriving them of their means of making a living. The Nazis in Germany modelled their concentration camps on the reservation system, and, as in the US, this folded back on notions of a ‘final solution’. Well into the twentieth century on the west coast the scalped pubic hair of Indian women brought a higher bounty than any other. Women bear children. Eliminate them and you eliminate the race.

* * *

The noble savage tradition carried on along the same lines as the tradition of Indian as guide post, Indian as obstacle to overcome, Indian as evil incarnate. For the most part, this line of mythic clothing got draped on the Indian armature by people who had no contact with Indians, but merely saw them as projections of their fantasies. And some of it is part of a feedback loop from the Indian-as-bad-guy tradition. Much of the notion of the Indian as supreme environmentalist, for instance, comes from the projection of him as embodiment of nature – in this case, not nature to be overcome, but nature to worship. Most of the ideas in the noble savage line have been so thoroughly discussed as to need little comment here, though one line that has been largely ignored, the noble savage = evil incarnate tradition, may justify some comment. An early example of this is the French soldier who helped the Huron destroy a fort to which he had been assigned along the British-French border. He left a board with the phrase “nous sommes toute sauvages” scrawled on it behind him when he disappeared into the forest. He clearly didn’t think he was joining a more decent society, but thought there was something evil about the Indians, and he wanted to become part of that evil, to revel in evil, as a form of decadent pleasure. The ravings of de Sade that are now worshipped by many European and Euro-American savants seem an odd echo of this theme. The thread runs through cultural history right up to the present moment. In recent years Mexican psychiatrists report treating large numbers of wealthy women troubled by dreams and fantasies of running off to Chiapas and having torrid nights of passion with Subcomandante Marcos. Although Marcos has been identified, and even before that, it was plain that he was not Mayan, the women imagine the face under the ski mask to be an Indian stereotype, and their fantasies tend to stress loss of inhibition, finally doing things they could not bring themselves to do with their husbands, rape, and defilement, rather than love, partnership or even revolutionary sympathy. And no wonder. For most whites, the Indian has never had a face.

3. ‘Real Indians’

One of the reasons for this facelessness is because ‘he’ is considered ‘the’ Indian. Perhaps the most basic lie of the invasion of the Americas is the notion that ‘the Indian’ is a unified and consistent being, alike from the arctic tundra to Tierra del Fuego. The more you learn about Native America, the more ludicrous this becomes. The languages spoken in isolated places, such as the Amazon Basin outnumber the languages of Europe. In Mexico, the great bottleneck of wave on wave of migration, native peoples still speak over eighty indigenous languages, belonging to more than a dozen separate families. Many tribes speak more than one language among themselves – there may
including a holocaust. At the time of Columbus, the indigenous peoples of America had no more relation to Jews than to any other people in the world. Since the invasion began, the persecution of both groups took something like a parallel course.

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some of it is part of a feedback loop from the Indian-as-bad-guy tradition. Much of the notion of the Indian as supreme environmentalist, for instance, comes from the projection of him as embodiment of nature – in this case, not nature to be overcome, but nature to worship. Most of the ideas in the noble savage line have been so thoroughly discussed as to need little comment here, though one line that has been largely ignored, the noble savage = evil incarnate tradition, may justify some comment. An early example of this is the French soldier who helped the Huron destroy a fort to which he had been assigned along the British-French border. He left a board with the phrase "nous sommes toute sauvages" scrawled on it behind him when he disappeared into the forest. He clearly didn't think he was joining a more decent society, but thought there was something evil about the Indians, and he wanted to become part of that evil, to revel in evil, as a form of decadent pleasure. The ravings of de Sade that are now worshipped by many European and Euro-American savants seem an odd echo of this theme. The thread runs through cultural history right up to the present moment. In recent years Mexican psychiatrists report treating large numbers of wealthy women troubled by dreams and fantasies of running off to Chiapas and having torrid nights of passion with Subcomandante Marcos. Although Marcos has been identified, and even before that, it was plain that he was not Mayan, the women imagine the face under the ski mask to be an Indian stereotype, and their fantasies tend to stress loss of inhibition, finally doing things they could not bring themselves to do with their husbands, rape, and defilement, rather than love, partnership or even revolutionary sympathy. And no wonder. For most whites, the Indian has never had a face.

3. 'Real Indians'

One of the reasons for this facelessness is because 'he' is considered 'the' Indian. Perhaps the most basic lie of the invasion of the Americas is the notion that 'the Indian' is a unified and consistent being, alike from the arctic tundra to Tierra del Fuego. The more you learn about Native America, the more ridiculous this becomes. The languages spoken in isolated places, such as the Amazon Basin outnumber the languages of Europe. In Mexico, the great bottleneck of wave on wave of migration, native peoples still speak over eighty indigenous languages, belonging to more than a dozen separate families. Many tribes speak more than one language among themselves – there may
be, for instance, a men’s ceremonial language, a language for women only, and so on. Some ceremonial languages become so complex that peoples with the simplest material culture imaginable don’t become fully fluent in their most important language unless they live long enough to become tribal elders. The complexity of culture—not to mention the complexity of perception and conceptualisation—underlying such languages should humble those of us who master our native language by the time we reach our teens, only extending vocabulary beyond that time.

If this fails to fill an observer with awe, the complexity and diversity of cultures should. A catalogue of them would not only be too large for this essay, it would probably be too large for any one person to compile with any accuracy, even in brief and general terms. Some tribes lived in large, highly regulated agrarian communities. Some lived in smaller groups, with an economy based primarily in hunting. Some were warlike, others avoided conflict at all costs. Some were egalitarian, some highly stratified. Some were highly competitive among themselves, while others carefully organised their societies along lines that made competition almost impossible. Some were aggressive empire builders, conquering and ruling empires that covered more ground than that of Charlemagne. Some organised their societies so that when they got to be larger than could be managed by face-to-face councils, some families left and started cognate tribes of their own that carried on their way of life in a different place. Some developed elaborate writing systems: Mayan systems get a lot of press these days, but they were surrounded by other systems in Mexico and Central America, and this does not begin to touch the many systems running a gamut from books made of coloured thread tied into knots to books inscribed in rolls of bark to sacred cosmologies rewritten year after year in large areas using coloured sand that was expected to be washed away by the rain, revealing messages in its departure. All, or nearly all, paid particular attention to the movements of the stars and planets, and their religions usually include star lore that can range from ‘just-so stories’ to elaborate judicial astrology to something like our own notions of the creation of the universe. Some extended this to the point where they became master astronomers and mathematicians. All, or nearly all, were profoundly religious, though this took on many forms, from the most liberating spirituality to brutal dogmas. Many practised the most efficient use of resources imaginable; some were extravagantly wasteful. Among the first group, this extends beyond simply utilising all parts of a hunted animal, to considering the impact of hunting over future generations. The fossil record tells us of several varieties of extravagant waste: many species of animals were hunted to extinction, sometimes by deliberately burning large areas either to kill animals in the fire or to drive them over cliffs. We should note the engineering skills of the peoples who built water distribution systems that have outlasted those built by the Romans. Many of these depend solely upon knowledge of hydraulics over time. The first principle in this involves the speed of flow: if the water flows too slowly it deposits silt; if it flows too fast, it erodes the earth around it. Some of these huge systems consist of nothing more than aqueducts dug out and reinforced by retaining walls and relieved by levies, the whole system orchestrated in such a way as to irrigate thousands of individual fields and provide water to dozens of towns.

Europeans and Euro-Americans tend to define Native American social structures in European terms. This usually falsifies them. Some have seen certain tribes (and even the peoples of the whole hemisphere!) as Capitalist, Communist, Fascist, Socialist, Republican, Anarchist. I’ll have to plead guilty to that last one myself. Those who have had no chief speaker whose powers extend further than persuasion, still lead lives based in ritual and relations with the spirit world that most contemporary Anarchists would not find compatible with their own thinking.

In one respect, however, this line of comparison can be seen as true, but it works retroactively. The founders of the United States borrowed heavily on the systems of checks and balances inherent in Iroquois League tribes in setting up their republic. Stalin pulled a few ideas out of a popular book on Amer-Indians he read as a young man, and so have other peoples during the last five centuries. Many North American Anarchists have adapted forms of communal management from those of specific Indian tribes during the last forty years. It’s interesting to note that those who have been most successful have usually been those who have had direct contact with their models, while those who simply read about them have wandered off into fantasy lands that founded pretty quickly.

At this moment, my own sense of the endurance and relative success of the EZLN rests as much on the moderation and adaptability of the Mayan people as on anything else. This includes their refusal to classify themselves according to any outside model. Not only does this make them less vulnerable to attack, it is one of the ways the Mayan peoples, in all their diversity, have redressed imbalances for some 2,000 years. Fifteen centuries ago another branch of the Mayan
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family could build impressive buildings, but when they had outlasted their usefulness to all but a tiny elite, the people could just as easily abandon them for a more genuine agrarian way of life.

I have been writing about Native American cultures in the past tense in order to suggest the great diversity of cultures that flourished here. Although many of these cultures have been snuffed out, many survive to the present. Their populations have grown since the late 19th century, and many of them speak the ‘Reconquest of America’. Part of the flattening and falsifying of American myths is the belief, reassuring to many Euro-Americans, that Indians are all part of a ‘once proud but now disappearing race’. Nothing could be further from the truth: Amer-Indians have no intention of disappearing.

* * *

Perhaps the most dangerous and derogatory extension of the ‘disappearing Indian’ lie is the idea that Native Peoples who have changed their ways of life in the last five hundred years are not ‘real Indians’. This attack on the reality of Indian life began before this century, but has reached fever pitch in the last forty years. The attack has come both from people looking for an excuse to steal more Indian land, and people who sincerely think they are the friends of Native Peoples. The first group usually takes a fairly simple, genetic approach: They claim that people who have no evidence documenting strong enough Native bloodlines are not real Indians. Of course they change the proportions to suit their needs, and, in other circumstances, will use any percentage of Native blood for purposes of excluding or robbing people. Their conception of genetics and identity remains as absurd as that of the Nazis. Not only does it assume genetic purity among Europeans, but also Euro-Americans. This becomes even more absurd when considered in terms of demographics before the European invasion of the Americas. The peoples who came across the Bering Straits to become the Indian Peoples came in separate waves, and during the millennia since this migration began, different groups inbred and cross-bred to form what could be called separate ‘races’. In some areas, this included adjustment to specific environments: the peoples of the Arctic, for instance, evolved large, powerful kidneys in order to metabolise blubber, while some of the peoples of the Andes developed extended lung capacity as an adaptation to the thin air of the high mountains. The demands of thieves for racial purity should be seen as opportunist racism, and though it requires constant effort to keep it in check, it needs no further discussion in a publication like this one.

With the other group we enter an eerie dream world, largely made up of the remains of previous projections of European ideas of what Amer-Indians should be, cross-bred with strange projections of nature as conceived primarily by people who spend their lives in suburbia. The first and perhaps still the most numerous of these groups are those who want to tell Indians how to dress and behave like Indians. They set up ‘pow-wows’ in which people from all over North America dress in the feather-fan headdress, claw necklaces, breechclouts for the men, sack dresses for the women, and high leggings worn by some of the tribes of the Great Plains and fixed as ‘generic Indian’ by the movies. And they’re supposed to dance like movie Indians – sometimes they even have men and women dancing together as partners. The clothing of the peoples of North America in the past ran a wide gamut, from ornate to Spartan. In the Upper Mid West, where I live, standard garb for most of the year was buckskin pants and tunics for the men, extended skirts for the women. Fur pelts made headdress, and often linings, cuffs, etc. that helped keep out the cold. In the summer much of this was shed, but not enough to make costume look much like the Plains tribes. Today, Indians in this area usually wear working class clothes most of the time, with a strong emphasis on comfort and durability. Jeans and work shirts take an important place for the men, many of whom work in the construction business. (Like many tribes of the North East, most Amer-Indians have no fear of heights, which they attribute to their child-rearing practices. This gives them a particular advantage in high steel work, where they can walk I-beams suspended by a single cable eighty storeys above the ground as casually as they might walk from one room of their homes to another. Many also work in such areas as highway construction.) Variations on the same garb are fairly common in the west, where Indian labour has taken over what’s left of the work formerly done by cowboys. After World War Two, many people from government agencies found that Indians, particularly on reservations, weren’t publicly practising their traditional dances and wearing traditional clothes. Although the Indian schools and the reservation system itself were designed to eliminate these things, the bureaucrats were shocked and amazed at how the Indian people had neglected their heritage. They set up restrictions on their rights in reservations if they didn’t put on public ceremonies, dressed in movie costumes. For many who did not live on reservations, they offered grants for this kind of thing, which were close to impossible to turn down for those who couldn’t find work. Now many tribes practice
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their traditional dances privately, wearing special articles of clothing only for specific functions that require them, and do the movie dances for white audiences.

More recent variations on this theme include the endless forms of excluding Native Americans on grounds of 'political correctness'. These can include outsiders trying to get Native peoples to become vegetarians, to worship 'mother earth' in the manner prescribed in New Age day-dreams, to conduct druggie pseudo-mysticism along the lines of Carlos Castenada's Don Juan cartoons, to be the poster children used to sell consumer goods that manufacturer claim are environmentally safe, etc. This kind of behaviour is nothing more than a resurgence of the missionary efforts of the past, but now using the argument that the Indians who don't conform to these foreign notions are not real Indians.

This can include a great deal of historical ignorance, as in the case of one fellow who was shocked that Indians, the great purveyors of preventive medicine, often smoke tobacco. This not only demonstrates a profound ignorance of where tobacco came from, but the long reach of its history. In the last year Hong Kong was returned to China. This emporium was established as part of the opium trade which Britain used to make up for its loss of revenues from its New England colonies, revenues based in cotton and tobacco.

Certainly some Indians have become what other Native Americans call 'apples'—red on the outside, white on the inside. But which people these are should be determined by Indians themselves, not by white people. Further, Indians themselves should determine what makes people Indian and what excludes them. If left alone, they don't have any trouble deciding things like this. I should note that keeping the faith does not preclude successful, mainstream professions or other measures of importance in the white world: it remains a matter of sense of life, community, responsibility, and other things that Indian people pick up on easily.

For white Americans, one of the lessons in this simply brings us back to the phoniness of our own flattened mythology. We are not what our ancestors were five hundred years ago. The majority of us, for instance, have not kept up our 'racial purity' nor our ancestral cultures. My father's parents, for instance, came here from Sweden early in this century. My father speaks a sort of old-fashioned Swedish, but although I listened to Swedes talk throughout my childhood, and knew more or less what they were saying, I can't speak Swedish. I don't clomp around in wooden shoes or wear elaborately embroidered shirts on special occasions, and although I can handle a sailboat well enough, I don't use one for basic transportation. Nothing Swedish endures in my working life, and in my personal life, all that's left of my Swedish heritage are a few customs to trot out at Christmas. My grandmother told me some wonderful, and in some instances probably ancient, stories when I was a child, but few people want to listen to them now. My grandfather even changed his name from Johannson to Young because he wanted to be a part of building the new society in the new world, where all could be equal, and man would never again rob his brother. My mother's parents were Dutch and German, and I have inherited very little of their culture and neither of their languages. My parents married outside their tribes, and in my mother's case, even her parents married outside their tribes. The parents of a lot of the kids I grew up with were Sicilian. It would not have been considered unusual if I had married one of the Sicilian girls in my high-school class, nor would people in this part of the country speculate on the African genes our children might have inherited from their mother's distant ancestors. Though this line of speculation could go on ad absurdum, the point is simple: most of those Euro-Americans who make claims about Indians not being genuine have held on to less of their cultural heritage than have most Indians. Most do not speak their ancestral languages, and talk of genetic purity is no more than, at best, an ugly joke. Unlike Indian people, they have renounced their heritage willingly, without coercion, and they have renounced it fully.

The Native peoples of the Americas have a lot to teach us if we are willing to listen and to learn, and to let go of our delusions of supremacy. And those Native people should do the teaching themselves whenever we have achieved the maturity to hear them. Oddly enough, in all the strange, great circles in which white/Indian relations run, one important thing they could teach us is to hang on to our own heritages as strongly as they have held onto theirs. Even if we honestly and intelligently checked out the lessons of our own history in this place, we would have better myths to live by than those that we use to dumb ourselves down to consumerist conformity.

**Epilogues**

1. Many native peoples have a history of gambling that extends far back before the coming of the Europeans. In recent years, many tribes have
their traditional dances privately, wearing special articles of clothing only for specific functions that require them, and do the movie dances for white audiences.

More recent variations on this theme include the endless forms of excluding Native Americans on grounds of 'political correctness'. These can include outsiders trying to get Native peoples to become vegetarians, to worship 'mother earth' in the manner prescribed in New Age day-dreams, to conduct druggie pseudo-mysticism along the lines of Carlos Castenada’s Don Juan cartoons, to be the poster children used to sell consumer goods that manufacturer claim are environmentally safe, etc. This kind of behaviour is nothing more than a resurgence of the missionary efforts of the past, but now using the argument that the Indians who don’t conform to these foreign notions are not real Indians.

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Epilogues

I.

Many native peoples have a history of gambling that extends far back before the coming of the Europeans. In recent years, many tribes have
set up casinos. This has caused outrage among many whites. One group seeks to take their right to run casinos away from them because they don't want to see them gain wealth or autonomy. It terrifies another group that the noble savages should sink to such vulgar, crass activity, which they blame on white people who have sold them fire water and stolen their heritage. These same people want to force them to stop gambling, since, after all, they know better what Indians need than the Indians do themselves, and if they could get away with it, they'd still be willing to cure them of this transgression by sticking soap in their mouths and shoving their heads into toilets. White opposition to gambling works against those members of tribal councils who don't want the casinos, so that the opposition of both white groups strengthens the hands of the Indians who want casinos. According to stories that many Indian people believe to be false, their lands were bought from their ancestors with beads. Now they're buying the place back with poker chips.

2. Quetzalcoatl was favoured among the gods: he was strong not only in body and courage, but also in intellect. It was he, for instance, who invented writing and presided over the arts. He knew he was handsome and blessed by the calendar, which is superior to the gods, because the gods needed and admired him. As the Evening Star, he escorted the Sun below the horizon in the west at dusk, and followed it through the nine stages of the underworld through the night. At midnight he and the Sun were sacrificed together so that the Earth could be reborn each day. This and his subsequent task as Morning Star of reviving the Sun and bringing it above the horizon in the East filled him with pride. Since he knew the paths of the stars, in part as their guide, he was lord of the dice, and patron of gambling.

His brother Tezcatlipoca was not his twin, but something more like his shadow. When you get crazy impulses, they come not from Quetzalcoatl, but from Tezcatlipoca, the god over your shoulder, always whispering strange things in your ear, as easily filling you with the urge to destroy as to create. He could at times transcend the calendar, not only escaping its fate but overruling the dice. His name and heraldic emblem was obsidian (or smoking) mirror, a kind of scrying glass that let you see past what might seem the normal course of destiny, often leading you back to yourself, your own powers and weaknesses. He played an elaborate part in sacrificing Quetzalcoatl each night, and he played a similar role in getting people started in

building things, though he didn't stick around to see them completed, something that held no interest for him.

Like the other gods, Quetzalcoatl appeared in the form of numerous avatars, some of which guided humans in their councils of state, bringing order to society. When one avatar was presiding over the affairs of the Toltec empire at its most magnificent, Tezcatlipoca took him aside and showed him his face in the obsidian mirror. At first he was pleased with what he saw, but as he looked, his face changed: pusules grew from the skin and all things evil appeared in his eyes. He then needed to atone for his weakness and leave the empire, to sail in a raft made of sea monsters across the waters that lead to the stars to find how he and his people had gone wrong.

Readers interested in one of the mainstreams of mythology-dressed-up-as-science should be able to recognize the Freudian names of these two characters, the Super-Ego and the Id. According to Freudian mythology, the Id is inherently unknowable — and, indeed, its situation outside the charitable shows how young and inexperienced a mythology claiming a scientific base remains. This does not refute it, but simply points out a problem that should be apparent in anything claiming scientific validity: its lack of empirical testing over a sufficient period of time. For the peoples of Central Mexico, Tezcatlipoca could be identified and delineated. Deity impersonation formed the base of much ceremonial life, and people were so used to this figure that they could impersonate him, and in so doing integrate the subconscious into every day life in a way that we can't do now.

3. Several tribes in the Upper Mid West allow white people, even those who have not proven their lack of ill intent, to attend some traditional dances that have nothing to do with tourist pow-wows. At these dances, women are not allowed to touch the tribal drum, nor are they allowed to make aggressively frontal moves in dances. If an outsider breaks these basic rules, members of the women's council will pull her aside, and tell her that while she takes part in these dances she will comport herself as a woman, or will have to leave. To outsiders, this seems shockingly sexist. The women's councils response to such charges are that sexism is a disease of white men and feminism a mutation of the same disease when it infects white women. They have had enough of white diseases. This, of course, makes outsiders see them as even more sexist. Yet these outsiders don't see the power the women's councils have had in the past and continue to exert today.
set up casinos. This has caused outrage among many whites. One group seeks to take their right to run casinos away from them because they don’t want to see them gain wealth or autonomy. It terrifies another group that the noble savages should sink to such vulgar, gross activity, which they blame on white people who have sold them fire water and stolen their heritage. These same people want to force them to stop gambling, since, after all, they know better what Indians need than the Indians do themselves, and if they could get away with it, they’d still be willing to cure them of this transgression by sticking soap in their mouths and shoving their heads into toilets. White opposition to gambling works against those members of tribal councils who don’t want the casinos, so that the opposition of both white groups strengthens the hands of the Indians who want casinos. According to stories that many Indian people believe to be false, their lands were bought from their ancestors with beads. Now they’re buying the place back with poker chips.

2.
Quetzalcoatl was favoured among the gods: he was strong not only in body and courage, but also in intellect. It was he, for instance, who invented writing and presided over the arts. He knew he was handsome and blessed by the calendar, which is superior to the gods, because the gods needed and admired him. As the Evening Star, he escorted the Sun below the horizon in the west at dusk, and followed it through the nine stages of the underworld through the night. At midnight he and the Sun were sacrificed together so that the Earth could be reborn each day. This and his subsequent task as Morning Star of reviving the Sun and bringing it above the horizon in the East filled him with pride. Since he knew the paths of the stars, in part as their guide, he was lord of the dice, and patron of gambling.

His brother Tezcatlipoca was not his twin, but something more like his shadow. When you get crazy impulses, they come not from Quetzalcoatl, but from Tezcatlipoca, the god over your shoulder, always whispering strange things in your ear, as easily filling you with the urge to destroy as to create. He could at times transcend the calendar, not only escaping its fate but overruling the dice. His name and hereditary emblem was obsidian (or smoking) mirror, a kind of scrying glass that let you see past what might seem the normal course of destiny, often leading you back to yourself, your own powers and weaknesses. He played an elaborate part in sacrificing Quetzalcoatl each night, and he played a similar role in getting people started in building things, though he didn’t stick around to see them completed, something that held no interest for him.

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Even in areas where alcoholism and drug use take a terrible toll on life expectancy, women are less subject to rape and spouse abuse, and more able to protect children from child abuse than whites living under the same conditions. When women’s rights are violated, they have a means of redress not available to their white counterparts. In many tribes here and to the east, only the women’s council can declare war. In a surprise situation, men can defend themselves, but can’t go beyond that without the approval of the women’s council. In contemporary times, ‘war’ usually means demonstrations to protect tribal rights, labour strikes, etc. During a strike among construction workers in the late ’70s, the men of a local tribe had to call their wives in order to get permission to do more than stand their ground. Their white co-workers jeered and ridiculed them viciously and contemptuously for this, but the Native men knew what they were doing, what their responsibilities were, and did not budge until they got word from the women’s council. Once they got it, and engaged, they were much less willing to make an easy or convenient agreement with management than the white men who had mocked them earlier.

4.
Several Inuit (Eskimo) people who had been educated in white schools were invited to a meeting of anthropologists in an urban centre in the US. They insisted on bringing a Shamaness with them. This woman had had contact with some artefacts of industrial society, and had met a few white people, but was still part of what the anthropologists call ‘the copper age’. Some of the anthropologists thought a copper age woman would be afraid of flying in an airplane. During the flight, she told one of the Inuit women who had gone to modern schools and had frequent contact with white people: “I hope you don’t pick up any of the feeble mindedness of those school people. They thought I didn’t know, but I could see they thought this thing we’re in would scare me. As a healer, I often have to go to hell and find out why the demons are bothering my patient. Then I have to go up to heaven and ask the spirits up there what to do. Then I have to figure out what it means. This thing we’re in now is nothing more than an over-grown snowmobile. I’ve known for many years that white people think like children. But look at them now! They don’t even know where the sky is.”

J.W. Baker

Native American Anarchism

It should be noted at the outset that this talk* is not about the anarchistic tendencies of the Native Americans (or ‘Red Indians’) but rather of the growth and evolution of an indigenous anarchistic tradition in the United States. The Native Americans have a number of traditions which are relevant to anarchistic theory, as Harold Barclay has observed, but that is quite another topic. Another point that needs comment is that the standard approach to the history of the American anarchists is biographical. For this talk, however, I have attempted to focus more on the ideas than the lives of men such as Warren and Tucker. Anyone who is interested in the latter should consult the titles in the notes.

A century ago, if anyone inquired about anarchism in America, they would have found that there were two contending branches within the larger movement, one which was the ‘classical’ European anarchism of Proudhon, Bakunin and Kropotkin, and the other a home grown variety which looked to Proudhon as well, but primarily to American theorists such as Warren, Andrews, Spooner and Tucker. The basic division was that the native anarchists supported a characteristically individualist American tradition while the Europeans favoured the collectivist and insurrectionary approach. Although the two camps were often at odds and doctrinally contemptuous of one another, both were fighting the same enemies and sought the same goal – human liberty and the destruction of authoritarianism – but proposed to arrive at it by different routes. Today few people who are interested in anarchism have any understanding of the historic American school, and those that do generally believe that its only legacy is the rightist (and usually capitalist) libertarian and objectivist movements. The common opinion is that the syndicalist/communist school of anarchistic thought is the sole claimant to historical and philosophic legitimacy. As I hope to suggest, this assertion is not only inaccurate and unfair,

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but also threatens to deprive contemporary anarchist theory of some really useful correctives to the one-sided classical anarchist tradition.

It was the collectivist anarchist movement propagated by immigrants such as Johann Most, Alexander Berkman, Emma Goldman and Luigi Gallianni, but also by Americans such as Albert Parsons, that achieved the greatest popularity— and notoriety—in the world at large. For a number of reasons, the actions and opinions of the collectivist and insurrectionary anarchists defined the movement as a whole in the popular mind, quite overshadowing the less flamboyant "philosophical" anarchists. Firstly, the insurrectionary school, which gained its grim insight into the "social question" in the openly class-ridden and authoritarian conditions of Europe, appealed to the very people most desperately in need of a social revolution—the industrial proletariat struggling to survive during the worst excesses of robber-baron capitalism. Emigrants fresh from numbing wage-slavery or landed estate peonage in Germany, Russia, France and Italy, where the old masters of the aristocracy and the church combined with the new masters of capital, found in the New World the same implacable conditions from which they had fled, or so they imagined. From within an immigrant group without access by language or tradition to the underlying differences between American and European society, the choice to react as desperately as they had abroad was rational, but ultimately futile. American radicalism, which spoke as much to the concerns of small farmers and craftsmen as it did to the workers, needed a different approach. As William Reichert observes about Josiah Warren's anarchist theory: "In many respects Peter Kropotkin was correct when he held that Warren's individualism was peculiar to America, for only in a land in which potential wealth lay everywhere underfoot could such a philosophy make sense. In Europe, where class lines were already tightly drawn and land and wealth were firmly in the grasp of an established oligarchy, the doctrine of the sovereign individual was not so readily believable".1

Secondly, the excitement of the independent political act which brought ephemeral popularity and notoriety was not necessarily an indication of success. The European anarchist movement unarguably attracted the attention it sought to get its message heard, but that message was almost universally misrepresented by the media and frightened or enraged not only the authorities and the capitalist elite but a large proportion of the very working class it sought to convince. What was lost through the dramaturgy of the *attentat* was the possibility of a true social revolution. Scorning the wider philosophic appeal of the individualist anarchists, the insurrectionists bought heavily into the romance and stirring drama of the Bakuninist vision of imminent violent rebellion, and built their hopes on the industrial—oppressed and extensive, was never as large a percentage of the American population as it was in England or Germany. While the immediate situation for many, at any point from the panic of 1873 through World War One was easily as oppressive and desperate in America as abroad, factors that the immigrants underestimated such as the ability of American business to bend and adapt over the longer haul or the strength of the native non-insurrectionary radicalism was crippling to their cause.

Thirdly, violent armed insurrection was no answer to the situation, and the reformers of labour social concerns, who may have sounded quite pusillanimous at the time, actually had a better estimate of what was possible and what was utopian. It would be wrong, perhaps, to place blame upon the anarchist movement for interpreting the situation as they did from our perspective of historical hindsight. At the time the ideology of the left and the inescapable conditions of working life made the desperate approach appear far more rational and appropriate than the paper protests of the individualists. However, from the perspective of history, the nineteenth century revolutionary ideal appears not only as utopian as Marx accused his rivals of being, but also singularly inappropriate for the United States. There was no way that such a philosophy, crafted for the social realities in Europe, could have had a universal attraction in the United States. There it was ghettoised among the unassimilated immigrants and a sprinkling of native workers, bourgeois avant gardists and similar intellectuals.

The popular view of anarchism in the United States was that anarchy was a "foreign" import, an insidious subversion spread by aliens from the bad Old World out to make trouble in paradise. Stereotypes straight out of *The Secret Agent* of unwashed, black-cladged fanatic bomb-throwers with German (or Slav)c accents were swallowed whole, and the general reaction was "throw the bums out" if not to hang them up to twist slowly in the wind. The appearance of any national anarchist movement was put down to the malice of the dirty Europeans who seduced credulous and decadent natives to join in the conspiracy against all decency— i.e. the American political hegemony. Anarchism was nothing more than the lurid spectacles of the Haymarket police riot and the McKinley *attentat*, the Wall Street and Palmer bombings. Its visible representatives were no more than
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representatives of a malignant frame of mind absolutely alien to the true American. It might therefore come as a surprise to many Americans that anarchism is 'as American as apple pie'. It arrived in its potential form not in the steerage of the nineteenth century immigrant vessels but along with that pie as part of the intellectual baggage aboard the 'Mayflower' and subsequent ships that brought the Puritan colonists to seventeenth century New England. Although like its continental counterpart it would not emerge as a coherent political system until the nineteenth century, the genes of anarchism were present within the American society long before.

It might almost be said that anarchism was bred into American society by natural selection. Many of the early English colonists emigrated to the New World not only for the promise of economic independence but also by reason of the oppressive authority of the established church. When religion dominated Western culture, the impulse to break free of its particular oppression was as compelling as later revulsion to economic and political oppression. Resistance to religious authoritarianism in the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries, when church and state were inextricably interconnected, involved political rebellion as well, but it is misleading to try to understand this revolt from the secular viewpoint of later revolutionary theory. To the pious, revolt against illegitimate religious authority was compelling on its own terms – for salvation rather than freedom.

The great majority of the New England colonists were Puritans intent on creating new and more perfect Christian community. Their vision was both collective and perfectionist, as they believed that the institution of the 'true church' could only be accomplished in a community unified in faith and practice. It was therefore necessary to evade the authority of the bishops in England and build their 'City on a Hill' in America where it could become a beacon and refuge to all true believers. Nothing should be suffered to withhold from the faithful the liberty to practice their religion. Unfortunately, the Puritan oligarchy did not envision liberty as open-ended and capable of individual variation, but rather as a collective 'freedom' to live and worship in accord with their own carefully defined (and strictly enforced) Christian ideal. This is often perplexing to modern people, who cannot understand how the ideal of religious liberty could be said to co-exist with the notorious Puritan tendency to strictly and minutely enforce their repressive moral system. How could the Puritan oligarchy, having fled under the pressure of enforced conformity then turn around and be as oppressive in turn, if not even more so?

The also believed in a vision of positive liberty. Positive liberty values freedom only as a means to achieve a virtuous result, to be free to do the right and proper thing. To this view, freedom is gained as much by being restrained from error and the temptation of evil as by being left alone to pursue propriety. To do anything else was to be enslaved by error. One was free if one lived as a faithful Christian after the Puritan definition of such a life. The elect (or those predestined to be saved) by their reception of divine grace would want nothing else, while the unregenerate, who would inevitably transgress the divine law, needed firm correction so that they could play their imperfect parts in honour of God's will as best they could until they made their inevitable posthumous descent into damnation. Coercion and invasion which prevented correct behaviour was intolerable, but that which prevented incorrect behaviour was not. Like many radical reformers throughout history, the Puritans began with a predetermined definition of acceptable human conduct, which they were convinced was commanded by the Christian deity through the medium of the Bible. Religious 'liberty' therefore was being free to think right thoughts and perform right actions as one's conscience impelled without interference by King, Church or Parliament – but it was firmly believed that a true Christian conscience would inevitably choose the Puritan way. Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson were banished for resisting the oligarchies of Plymouth and Boston not for their belief in human freedom but rather in the name of what their 'divinely inspired' consciences told them was a truer vision of Christianity. It is misleading to see their contribution as more than a readiness to question authority and insist on the moral principle of following one's own convictions, such as an anarchic valuation of freedom in the abstract.

A belief in a divinely inspired, morally infallible conscience could support two conflicting approaches to freedom. The positive version, as has been described, defines freedom as the ability to live in a harmonious state with right-thinking mankind in accord with some universal moral truth. As Isaiah Berlin observed, it is implicitly authoritarian. Deviance from the ideal is evil, and tolerance no virtue at all if it not only allowed the deluded to err but neglected to force them to see the error of their ways. Such a vision of freedom inevitably denies that one's conscience could honestly differ in opinion from the socially sanctioned view of reality, so that non-conformity implied wilful disobedience to universal truth. For the Puritans freedom was made possible by divine inspiration speaking through the individual
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conscience, but in conformity with God’s will. For the later rationalists, from Rousseau to our contemporary politically correct reformers, one’s commitment to the right and reasonable course of moral activity as a rational human being is the proof of one’s true freedom. In each case, the community has a duty to help the unenlightened shed the fetters of their error and see the light by ‘education’ (indoctrination) if possible, but by coercion – ‘for their own good’ – if not.

The other implication of the ultimate authority of the individual conscience is that there is no one single truth and that real freedom lies in personal autonomy; not in conformity to other people’s assertions about universal morality but in remaining true to one’s own convictions. By asserting that the key to correct behaviour lay in the individual conscience, Calvinist Puritanism contained within it the seed of its own contradiction. Even amongst the Puritan elite there were heated debates as to exactly what God or the Bible allowed or disallowed, while the *adiaphora*, the things not covered at all, were suspect by default. Disputes were common, and inevitably some people found their own consciences, which were truly Christian to their satisfaction, led them to interpretations that seriously contradicted the orthodox. This led in quite the opposite direction towards a negative liberty which valued the right to be left alone to follow one’s own version of truth above conformity to any socially defined ideal. No one had either the responsibility or the right to correct the apparently misguided opinions of others, and invasion or coercion of any sort was wrong. The ideal was voluntary conformity to divinely provided natural rather than man-made laws, which when secularised became the basis for the doctrine of anarchism.

The religious revivals of the eighteenth century were vital in breaking down the old orthodoxy, but it was the secularising influence of the enlightenment which made socialism, anarchism and all of the new political systems of the nineteenth century possible. To grossly oversimplify the contribution of the latter, this great sea change in Western thought shifted the moral imperative away from religious ideology towards a rational and voluntarist moral philosophy. The old dependence of an irretrievably flawed humanity on God for guidance was superseded by the belief that people could themselves rationally discern and voluntarily follow the natural laws governing morality. In particular, Richard Cumberland’s optimistic anthropology, which prefigures Kropotkin’s theories on human co-operation, held that authentic moral judgements were not subjective but based on universal truths or laws, and encouraged benevolent human interaction as opposed to the self-interested conflict of Hobbes. These natural laws, theorists as varied as Hutcheson, Pufendorf and Locke asserted, enabled individuals of a reasonable disposition to act for not only their own good but for the public good as well. Any authentic human right or moral act will benefit both the individual and the community. This hypothetical innate ability to determine the correct course of human interaction accompanied the concept of natural rights and led ultimately to the anarchist ideal. Rather than assuming a reliance on religious inspiration, the belief arose that a rational revolution which would destroy the old ignorance and immoral social forms could be achieved by awakening in each individual conscience the perception of these universal moral truths.

By 1800, the old Calvinist orthodoxy of New England was on the defensive as the wave of rationalist and idealist reformism rose with the same moralistic vigour with the intent of bringing the world to rights. Saving society wholesale rather than individual souls on the retail was the new order of the day. The primary enemy of righteousness was still unbelief, but liquor (the demon rum), slavery and the conditions in prisons or schools spawned numerous reform movements. A division between the religious revivals of Charles Grandison Finney and William Miller (or Joseph Smith) and more secular concerns about abolition and prohibition led to political and economic questions about life in general in the new republic. Following the war of 1812, reformers and idealists sought to divert society from the coarse living, hard drinking and open greed of the time. The frontier mentality with its hard living and callous attitudes permeated even the East as men rushed about ruthlessly stalking their fortunes. Middle class American women, appalled by the venality and aggressiveness of the time, joined in league with the liberal ministry, which had ousted Calvinism only to be marginalised by the rampant secularism, to endorse the culture of sentiment as an antidote to masculine excess. As James J. Martin observes: “A welter of reform movements, already was penetrating America to its furthest territorial reaches, the ultimate effect being the prevention of a solidification of American thought for almost two generations ... Peace, anti-slavery, temperance, bible and tract societies; religious revivalism, women’s rights and moral reform; these and a host of lesser agencies created tremendous intellectual unrest throughout all parts of the country”.

It was out of this cultural ferment that American anarchism first grew. Although the roots of American anarchism are many and varied, Josiah Warren (1798-1874) can be identified as the seminal figure in
conscience, but in conformity with God’s will. For the later rationalists, from Rousseau to our contemporary politically correct reformers, one’s commitment to the right and reasonable course of moral activity as a rational human being is the proof of one’s true freedom. In each case, the community has a duty to help the unenlightened shed the fetters of their error and see the light by ‘education’ (indoctrination) if possible, but by coercion – ‘for their own good’ – if not.

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the movement. Born in Massachusetts from old Yankee stock, Josiah Warren was one of the new secular radicals whose vision went beyond the religious revivalism and quietism of the Come-outers or the Non-Resistance League. He joined in the great exodus from the rocky hills of New England and went west to Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1819 to improve his lot. Warren, who believed in action as well as talk, was a successful musician, music teacher, inventor and entrepreneur as well as a dedicated social experimenter. He was converted to socialist idealism by the lectures of Robert Owen and moved from Cincinnati to Owen’s experimental community of New Harmony in Indiana with his family in 1825. There were a number of scientists and reformers at New Harmony, and venous social experiments such as the application of education to both sexes which fascinated him, but the Owenite ideal was collective rather than individual. Warren soon came to disagree with this. Instead of communal control and institutionalism, Warren expressed the anarchistic necessity of the ‘soverignity of the individual’:

Society must be so converted as to preserve the SOVEREIGNTY OF EVERY INDIVIDUAL inviolate. That it must avoid all combinations and connections of persons and interests, and all other arrangements which will not leave every individual at all times to dispose of his or her person, and time, and property in any manner in which his or her feelings or judgment may dictate, WITHOUT INVOLVING THE PERSONS OR INTERESTS OF OTHERS.6

It should not be thought that by his uncompromising stand on individual liberty that Warren was an egoist or ready to surrender equality for independence. American ‘rugged’ individualism has rightly been characterised as aggressively selfish and competitive, but Warren was not party to this ‘American cult of unrestrained wealth-getting’, even if he did call for individual over group liberty and the necessity of private possession of tools and accommodations. Rather than fall prey to the Scylla of market forces on the one hand and the Charybdis of communitarian ownership on the other, Warren chose to confront economic inequality through a co-operative application of individual sovereignty and the ‘labour cost principle’. This was simply that every worker deserved the full benefit of his labour and that any profit or interest collected by others from his or her work was wrong. Preferring to demonstrate rather than just argue his ideas, he established several ‘time stores’ (the first in May, 1827) to support experiments with the cost principle in which goods were valued according to the amount of human labour that had gone into their production, and exchanged for script promising the same amount of labour to be redeemed by anyone who wanted that amount and sort of labour. The storekeeper received only the cost for his own labour (carefully timed) and expenses such as rent and upkeep, and his books were open to all customers. The aim was to circumvent the exploitation inherent in capitalism, which Warren characterised as a sort of ‘civilised cannibalism’, by exchanging goods and services on co-operative rather than supply and demand principles. These were the world’s first modern cooperatives, and the principle was soon copied by others in England, continental Europe and across America.

Like Marx, who also accepted the labour cost principle, Warren was concerned about the relative intensity and production of various hours of labour, whether mental, material or managerial. His solution was to value unpleasant and difficult labour at a higher rate whereby the most disagreeable work carried a greater cost to the consumer through a principle of ‘repugnance’. Pleasant and interesting work, even if more technically difficult, was not rewarded separately by Warren in contrast to Marx who more pragmatically extended extra value to the more intellectual or skilful efforts. Warren also supported a form of mutual banking where capital to get raw materials, tools of production, build buildings, start businesses or develop products was provided without interest or charge beyond the cost of negotiation and other direct expenses of the bank’s effort in securing and disbursing the loan.

Warren’s role in American anarchist tradition was analogous to that of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon in Europe, whose ideas Warren anticipated in the Peaceful Revolutionists, the first (1833) anarchist newspaper in America. He inevitably arrived at the conclusion that government was both unnecessary and detrimental to human happiness. “Government and law”, argued Warren, “were merely forms of language not material [real] things, and as such were by their nature subject to an innumerable variety of different definitions, constructions and applications.”3 It was quite obvious that legislated laws, made one year and repealed or interpreted in quite different ways the next were the height of human arbitrariness. “The wild fluctuation of legislation and the political intrigue ... convinced him that laws and governments were public means used for private ends”.6 Laws were made by the powerful interests and elites for their own benefit, and were nothing but words which could be interpreted as the moods and prejudices of judges, juries and bureaucrats dictated. “To possess the interpreting power of verbal institutions is to possess unlimited power.”7
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For all of his idealism, Warren’s first thought was to put his principles into practice and test the theory by the results. Warren recognised common weakness of radicals and reformers who create elaborate rationales for new social systems with no basis in empirical reality which inevitably fail to live up to their grandiose promise. “We cannot construct any verbal organisation that will not wear out by its own friction”, he warned. The penchant to weave wonderful systems out of words and then refuse to acknowledge any discrepancy between the claims and the reality is a serious weakness with radicals and totalitarians from Warren’s time to today. The inadequacy of artificial intellectual constructions is excellent advice for Marxists (or anarchists) who choose to believe rhetoric promising wonderful but impossible ideals and goals wrapped up in honeyed words such as ‘the proletariat’, ‘democracy’, and so forth in the face of obvious contradictions. A good example is the case of the many sentimental Western communists and socialists who retained glowing perceptions of the Soviet Union after 1917 despite the clarity of Berkman and Goldman’s testimony that the Commissar had no clothes. Instead of government coercion and legal authority Warren proposed ‘Councils of Deliberation’ to arbitrate councils of experts, chosen for their knowledge and skill rather than their political astuteness, were paid for their labour at the going rate only after they had rendered their decision and the reasons supporting it, and even then, anyone with sufficient justification could personally dissent from decisions.

The basis of human liberty for Warren was not mass organisation nor artificial combinations of people claiming corporate rights, but the rights of each individual to happiness and security. “National happiness… consists of the happiness of the individuals who compose this nation, and that individual happiness consists in nothing so much as the liberty of person and property”. Otherwise, he warned, a sort of group nationalism or tribalism arises where each group area or faction demands both allegiance and conformity within, and maintains antagonism towards groups or individuals outside of the tribe, with the motto being, as Daniel Webster’s was: “My tribe, my whole tribe, and nothing but my tribe”! This sort of narrow factionalism and loyalty reduces the role of the individual to being a pawn and foments the sort of trouble we have seen throughout history and flourishes today in Bosnia, Rwanda or on certain American college campuses where the more ‘politically correct’ feminists or gays have retreated to the old extremes of intolerant tribalism.

Warren accepted the desirability for private ownership of property but not the unlimited and aggrandising sort of ownership of more wealth than one personally creates by his or her own labour. He recognised that property owned in common left individuals at the mercy of their partners or their communities, and supported the right to possess and occupy as much property as was required for one’s livelihood, but no more, as a basis for individual independence. He also recognised that individual diversity rather than collective conformity naturally characterised the human race; that everyone was different from one another in some or many ways which negated the concept of freedom as nationalism. The idea that there was a ‘general will’ that could be ascertained through voting or some other democratic pretence to support public opinion for governmental aggression against dissenters was in his mind the basis for all tyranny. Social harmony, peace and security could be achieved only by providing unlimited opportunity for the freedom to differ, and that the attempt to use force to obtain conformity was a monstrous wrong against humanity.

Following Josiah Warren’s pioneering efforts at developing, testing and practising an equitable anarchistic philosophy, a number of other activists and radical thinkers joined the movement. One who was converted through hearing a persuasive speech of Warren’s was Stephen Pearl Andrews (1812-1886). Andrews was born in Templeton, Massachusetts, the son of a Baptist minister and grew up in a household where the Peace Movement (against the war of 1812) and Temperance were as important as serious education and theology. He attended Amherst Academy before going south to join his elder brother, who was a lawyer in Jackson, Mississippi, in 1830. It was there that Pearl (as he was referred to) also took up law and soon got involved with the cause of abolition. This was just the first of an almost endless number of causes that he would accumulate and compound over a long and intense career of idealism that would put even our most determined New Agers to shame. His interests included every sort of social rectification, from women’s rights to universal languages and shorthand, but our interest in him is for his adoption and amplification of Warren’s system. In 1850, he not only published a clear synthesis of individual anarchism as a social philosophy in The Science of Society (1852) but also joined with Warren in Modern Times, the anarchistic community on Long Island which was a centre for social reform before the Civil War.

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Andrews amplified Warren's teachings on individual sovereignty, the cost principle for economic organisation and diversity.
There are no two objects in the universe which are precisely alike ... Infinite diversity is the universal law ... Just as harmony in the universe is maintained by the single atom obeying its own law, so is it maintained in society by the single atom, the individual, obeying its own law ... The only law is the Sovereignty of the Individual which gives every man [and, he would have been quick to add, every woman] absolute control over himself limited only by the onerous consequences of his action.  

He opposed all governmental and institutional interference, which he believed was the cause of every social difficulty, including problems in personal relationships. He faulted the state for the coercion of taxation, militarism, capital punishment, the failure to prevent crime, and the restrictions on personal freedom in general. Andrews believed, as Warren did, that the reification of artificial intellectual constructs supported by institutions lay at the heart of social and economic disorder.

The most stupendous mistake that this world of ours has ever made is that of erecting an abstraction, the State, the Church, Public Morality, according to some accepted standard ... into a real personality, and making it paramount to the will and happiness of the individual.

Since it was the practice of governments and other social institutions to create and enforce just such abstractions, he emphatically rejected the ‘positive liberty’ of morality through coercion.

Give up ... the search after the remedy for the evils of government in more government. The road lies just the other way - toward individuality and freedom from all government ... It is the inherent viciousness of the very institution of government itself, never to be got rid of until our natural individuality of action and responsibility is restored. Nature made individuals, not nations; and while nations exist at all, the liberties of the individual must perish.  

Andrews was firmly confident in the ability of people to make their own voluntary combinations for economic and social co-operation, and of the necessity for preserving the diversity of individual human behaviour, short of serious invasion in the lives of others. He supported a socialist model of human interaction to the extent that he avidly introduced the first American publication in English of Marx’s Manifesto when it was published in Woodhull & Claflin’s Weekly in 1871. He was a leader in the eccentric American Section 12 of the First International before it was indignantly expelled by the Marxists and trade unionists. Andrews became too concerned with a plethora of radical reforms to concentrate on any single issue such as anarchism, but he provided a valuable contribution through his work with Warren and the anarchist cause.

Another influential labourer in the anarchist vineyard was Lysander Spooner (1808-1887). Like Andrews, Spooner was a lawyer, but where Andrews was passion and empathy, Spooner was cold logic and detached rationality. Spooner’s radicalism evolved through a series of challenges to the pretensions of the State against which he maintained an isolated and determined opposition.

Spooner made no claim to moderation of thought or opinion; for him it was enough to tell things like the are even at the cost of offending one’s contemporaries beyond redemption.  

Spooner’s strength was his carefully crafted arguments opposing governmental incursions against the liberty of the individual, many of which have never been surpassed in their clarity and icy logic. His earliest attacks on the establishment were against the suppositions of traditional Christianity from an old fashioned eighteenth century deist position, but it was the injustices and inconsistencies in civil society that infuriated and inspired his mature attacks. As a young lawyer, he refused to accept certain professional requirements for admission to the Bar and simply began his practice without them, then successfully had the offending rules repealed by the Massachusetts legislature through the strength of a published argument he circulated among the representatives. He soon gave up the practice of the law for his life’s work fighting the oppression of the state. Annoyed by the expense and inefficiency of the federal postal service, he declared that the government had no right cited in the Constitution to a postal monopoly, and set up an illegal (and successful) mail service of his own. His intent was to get a case before the Supreme Court, but the government officials crushed the effort through prosecution without making the mistake of letting him have his day in court. Nevertheless, Congress was obliged by public sentiment to reduce the postal rates the following year.

But what Spooner wanted was the destruction of Statist monopoly, not any particular victory. Over the years he struck at the unconstitutionality of slavery, the illegitimacy of political representation and majoritarianism (which he likened to a sort of ‘divine right’ as objectionable as the old exploded divine right of kings), the money monopoly, the legitimacy of patent and copyright laws and numerous other injustices. The key to Spooner’s protest was the Enlightenment concept of ‘natural law’. Legislation, he argued, was not dedicated to
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Give up ... the search after the remedy for the evils of government in more government. The road lies just the other way - toward individuality and freedom from all government ... It is the inherent viciousness of the very institution of government itself, never to be got rid of until our natural individuality of action and responsibility is restored. Nature made individuals, not nations; and while nations exist at all, the liberties of the individual must perish.

Andrews was firmly confident in the ability of people to make their own voluntary combinations for economic and social co-operation, and of the necessity for preserving the diversity of individual human behaviour, short of serious invasion in the lives of others. He supported a socialist model of human interaction to the extent that he avidly introduced the first American publication in English of Marx’s *Manifesto* when it was published in *Woodhull & Clafin’s Weekly* in 1871. He was a leader in the eccentric American Section 12 of the First International before it was indignantly expelled by the Marxists and trade unionists. Andrews became too concerned with a plethora of radical reforms to concentrate on any single issue such as anarchism, but he provided a valuable contribution through his work with Warren and the anarchist cause.

Another influential labourer in the anarchist vineyard was Lysander Spooner (1808-1887). Like Andrews, Spooner was a lawyer, but where Andrews was passion and empathy, Spooner was cold logic and detached rationality. Spooner’s radicalism evolved through a series of challenges to the pretensions of the State against which he maintained an isolated and determined opposition.

Spooner made no claim to moderation of thought or opinion; for him it was enough to tell things like the are even at the cost of offending one’s contemporaries beyond redemption.

Spooner’s strength was his carefully crafted arguments opposing governmental incursions against the liberty of the individual, many of which have never been surpassed in their clarity and icy logic. His earliest attacks on the establishment were against the suppositions of traditional Christianity from an old fashioned eighteenth century deist position, but it was the injustices and inconsistencies in civil society that infuriated and inspired his mature attacks. As a young lawyer, he refused to accept certain professional requirements for admission to the Bar and simply began his practice without them, then successfully had the offending rules repealed by the Massachusetts legislature through the strength of a published argument he circulated among the representatives. He soon gave up the practice of the law for his life’s work fighting the oppression of the state. Annoyed by the expense and inefficiency of the federal postal service, he declared that the government had no right cited in the Constitution to a postal monopoly, and set up an illegal (and successful) mail service of his own. His intent was to get a case before the Supreme Court, but the government officials crushed the effort through prosecution without making the mistake of letting him have his day in court. Nevertheless, Congress was obliged by public sentiment to reduce the postal rates the following year.

But what Spooner wanted was the destruction of statist monopoly, not any particular victory. Over the years he struck at the unconstitutionality of slavery, the illegitimacy of political representation and majoritarianism (which he likened to a sort of ‘divine right’ as objectionable as the old exploded divine right of kings), the money monopoly, the legitimacy of patent and copyright laws and numerous other injustices. The key to Spooner’s protest was the Enlightenment concept of ‘natural law’. Legislation, he argued, was not dedicated to
discovering the principles of natural justice, but worked rather to “overturn ... natural law and substitute for it the arbitrary will of power”. 

The consent of the governed could not be presumed without individual consent, despite the tendency of governments to assert that forced participation by taxation or voting or documents such as the constitution, established the legitimacy of governmental representation. Neither numbers nor political might determined what was right, and the State did not have any legitimate authority to make decisions in behalf of the people.

One remedy that Spooner advocated was the power juries derived from English common law to not only judge the guilt or innocence of the defendant on trial, but to judge the validity of the laws involved as well. “Trial by jury was a formal establishment of the right of revolution, which no government ever willingly acknowledges”.

Today, the American federal court judges, using the Constitution as an ultimate authority in a way Spooner detested, have abrogated this ancient right to themselves, but originally it was the right of each jury to decide whether a legislated law should be enforced or struck down. The people themselves were the ultimate basis for legal authority, not the state nor any of its documents. The legal trade naturally upheld the state’s power as the basis for the, law not the rights of the common people.

The authority of ‘the law’ was theoretically derived from the ‘supreme power of the state’. As Webster’s dictionary then defined it:

this expression apparently meant force in its largest concentration, which might be in the person or persons of one or several men. This rendered the principle of law extremely uncertain, and, in cases of wide dispersal of power through various factions, actually served to nullify it. If law stemmed from the physical force requisite to obtain obedience thereto, then there was no real distinction between law and force, a condition that deprived it of all moral character and rendered it exceptionally unpalatable to a considerable audience. Another implication of this definition, said Spooner, that a command to commit an injustice was as legal as a commission to perform justice, as long as it emanated from a source sufficiently strong to effect coercion.

All the great governments of the world – those now existing, as well as those that have passed away – have been of this character. They have been mere bands of robbers, who have associated for the purposes of plunder, conquest, and the enslavement of their fellow men. And their laws, as they have called them, have only been such agreements as they have found necessary to enter into, in order to maintain their organisations, and act together in plundering and enslaving others, and in securing to each his agreed share of the spoils.

Such uncompromising opposition to the state and its prerences, well forcibly argued, was Spooner’s contribution to the anarchist cause.

The final and most comprehensively influential American anarchistic theorist that I would like to consider was Benjamin R. Tucker (1854-1939). Tucker’s gift lay originally, like Warren or Proudhon, not in inspired oratory such as Andrews could deliver, but in a capacity for making a clear and cohesive synthesis of anarchist thought. He brought together in his journal Liberty (1881-1908) the relevant ideas of not only Warren, Andrews and Spooner and their contemporaries such as abolitionist and sexual radical Ezra Heywood, mutualist William B. Greene and land reformer J.K. Ingalls, but also the European theories of Proudhon, Bakunin and Stirner. Liberty acted as a clearing house and debating society anarchist and libertarian controversialists, and was the most influential magazine its kind, reaching audiences in America, England, Germany and elsewhere. However, Tucker was far from being a passive recipient of other opinions. He edited Liberty with a firm hand and maintained his own rigorous vision of what was and was not compatible with anarchism. Acting more after the pattern of Spooner, whose clarity of thought and vision was untroubled by the vagaries or complaints of others, Tucker maintained a rigorous and demanding attack on authoritarianism and government in all its guises. Never an easy or sympathetic personality to deal with, and driven by his persistent and logical vision of human freedom, Benjamin Tucker was the culminating figure in the first great flowering of American native anarchism.

Tucker was born into a liberal and comfortable household in South Dartmouth, Massachusetts, in 1854. He attended MIT for engineering and followed a number of radical causes such as prohibition and women’s suffrage before seriously turning his attention to politics. In 1872, he met Josiah Warren and William Greene, and began a correspondence with Ezra Heywood which led to his acceptance as an anarchist spokesman although he was only eighteen. He soon gained a prominent position in radical circles by his translation of Proudhon’s 500-page What is Property? in 1876, and by the short-lived but impressive journal, the Radical Review (1877-78). Tucker helped Heywood during his trouble with the postal authorities in 1878 by publishing a pamphlet in his defence, and by taking over the editorship of Heywood’s paper, The Word, while he was in custody. It was the founding of Liberty, however that gave Tucker the forum he needed to develop a consistent and logical exposition of American anarchism.
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Tucker's conception of anarchism rested on the principles of individual sovereignty and equal liberty. Only individuals had rights or rather an individual right—the right to be left alone. Each individual was entitled to enjoy "the greatest amount of liberty compatible with the equality of liberty." One's liberty extended as far as was consistent with that of everyone else's and if power or authority were to be extended in this manner, it would effectively cancel itself out. In every other situation it was necessary to achieve mutual consent and develop agreements and contracts between interacting individuals. Society and groups had no rights beyond those of their constituent individuals. Society was in fact not an independent entity at all but simply a series of relationships among individuals, and relations can have no rights.

Accepting that the struggle for liberty and equality began with economic oppression, Tucker blamed the forces of monopoly and privilege for all of the evils of society. He asserted that there were four sorts of monopoly that existed through the power of the state to the benefit of certain people which were the basis for inequality and hardship for the many, and luxury and privilege for the few. These were:

1) Land ownership in excess of what one person could use and occupy.
2) Credit in the form of the governmental control of the currency and interest rates.
3) Tariffs which artificially raised the prices (and profits) on goods people needed.
4) The patent/copyright infringement on the free use of objects and ideas.

In each case the action the government perverted the equitable distribution of the surplus value of human labour and natural resources so that it flowed to the privileged capitalists through the three forms of legal usury: interest, profit and rent. "To Tucker these were not the effects of natural economic processes but by products of privilege derived from the possession of power and enjoyed by a few." 16 As he said, it was the power of legally privileged capital to increase without labour that lay at the heart of the Social Question, and its solution lay in the abolition of the authority that supported such a capitalist system.

The source of such authority was for Tucker overwhelmingly economic and political, although he recognised that the power that

religion had been the original source of many existing monopolies and privileges in the past. The primary reservoir of authority was of course the state, and anyone who sought to maintain this monopoly of authority was the valid target of all anarchists and the enemy of the people. The state's real character was simply invasion, the foremost exercise of this invasion being the enforced extraction of taxes, but which included all sorts of illegitimate coercion. Without the state and its support by laws, armies, police forces, courts and legislatures of monopoly and privilege, the whole rotten enterprise of capitalism and the invasion into the lives of individuals would fail. Marx in particular "Tucker found to be an abominable enemy of liberty because of his advocacy of securing all power and authority for the State, whatever his express goals of an eventual workers' Eden in the great by and by.

How was the revolution necessary to destroy the state to come about? Tucker scorned both the insurrectionary aims of the European anarchists and the reformist plans of the socialists to capture power through the electoral and legislative process as impractical and inevitably resulting in the very expansion of authority that was the ostensible object of the attack. He was not entirely against the use of force; indeed he made some rather violent claims for the justification of force early in his career (1886) which he never abandoned: "The right to resist oppression by violence is beyond doubt; it is the only policy of exercising this right that anarchists at this juncture have to consider." 17 He was however quite dubious about the efficacy of force in any particular case, especially after the unfortunate outcome of the Haymarket affair, which for all its stirring drama was not only ineffectual (except at producing martyrs) but also played into the hands of the authorities in a big way. As for the usefulness of the ballot, Tucker was even more incredulous:

Now what is the ballot? It is neither more nor less than a paper representative of the bayonet, the billy [club] and the bullet. It is a labour-saving device for ascertaining on which side force lies and bowing to the inevitable. 18

In the end, Tucker asserted, the only way to bring about the anarchist rectification of society was through convincing the majority of its ultimate value and to help them work upon their conviction to bring about a new society. Short of a true popular acceptance of the anarchist system all attempts to impose an anarchist revolution would not only be ineffectual but also thoroughly compromise the very ideals true anarchists stood for.
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Initially he was very supportive of the anarchistic enterprises by the collectivists. He was particularly impressed with and strongly influenced by Bakunin, and translated and published *God and the State* into English. He supported the Russian nihilists (and took up a collection for a group of nihilist refugees), Kropotkin, Reclus, Malatesta and others, especially when they were in trouble with the authorities, despite his severe criticism of what he took to be their failings in understanding truly anti-authoritarian anarchism. Tucker considered himself a socialist (secondly after an anarchist) as the result of his struggle against 'usury and capitalism', but anything that smelled of 'state socialism' was thoroughly rejected, and collectivists such as Most or others who supported the communist enterprise Tucker dismissed as state socialists sailing under false colours. Unionism and syndicalism he dismissed as a composition of compulsion, red tape and parliamentary hocus-pocus. Inevitably, Tucker found himself at odds with the insurrectionist and revolutionary collectivists in their support for syndicalism and communism, whom he denounced, asserting that "anarchism is for liberty, and neither for nor against anything else". His response to their criticisms and attacks were vivid and unsparing, while he came to detest the unfortunate Most and despise many of the pet ideas and projects of the NWI, Berkman, Goldman, et al., he always maintained a respect for their goals if not their means. Following Haymarket and the ineffectual attempt to unite the various anarchist parties at Pittsburgh in 1883, he distanced himself from the insurrectionists and was not slow in asserting that their authoritarian and violent proclivities were false anarchism even as they accused him of petty bourgeois armchair radicalism. Yet even after his virulent diatribes against Marx's authoritarianism (and his plagiarism of Proudhon), he was able to praise the old communist in an obituary for his undoubted contribution to the labour movement and the cause of the working man. Even as he railed against Emma Goldman's insurrectionism he declared that *Mother Earth* was the best of the journals that followed the demise of *Liberty*. He was actually more unrelentingly critical of socialists such as Henry George, whom he saw supporting the state in a major way, than of his erstwhile anarchist comrade. Tucker stood unbendingly for freedom and although he didn't get caught up in the fashion for collectivism that swept the Left at the close of the nineteenth century, he was no less, but rather more the anarchist for that.

Perhaps the greatest vindication for Tucker and his school of thought has been the lessons of the twentieth century. The brave new world of communism and insurrectionism, formed in the idealism and optimism of the last century has been tried and proven wanting in the very way that Tucker foresaw. As Rudolf Rocker observed:

Tucker's conception of the inevitable outcome of State Socialism, or better expressed State Capitalism, was attacked most bitterly by the authoritarian socialists of all schools who deplored him for having made a caricature of socialism which had nothing in common with reality. The dreadful experiences we have had since 1914 have shown us very clearly that Tucker not only foresaw things correctly but, if anything, underestimated them. Only the most daring imagination could have foreseen happenings like the Moscow trials against the Trotskyites, the systematic annihilation of hundreds of thousands of thousands, and the terrible demoralisation of a movement which degenerated into mob madness, justifying in its blind submission every crime which is praised as a virtue by its leaders.19

One of the first and most perceptive observers of the havoc wreaked by State Socialism was Emma Goldman, whose last publication, *The Place of the Individual in Society* (1940), presents the essence of Individualist case as cogently as Tucker. After carefully disposing of laissez faire 'rugged individualism' and similar excuses for unbridled exploitation he observes:

Life begins with man, the individual. Without him there is no race, no humanity, no State. No, not even 'society' is possible without man. It is the individual who lives and suffers. His development, his advance, has been a continuous struggle against the fetishes of his own creation and particularly so against the 'State'.20

The impulse to always fight the last war over again rather than perceiving altered conditions has doomed more than one political movement to impotent irrelevance.

While it is true that history written by the winners, the claim that the only orthodox anarchism is collectivist because that was the element which waged the good fight from the 1880s to the 1930s ignores the fact that not only did it fail in its objectives, but that the entire collective adventurer, as classically represented by Marx, et al., has fallen under the sword of history. The rise of international capitalism and the technologically enhanced ability of the state to detect and coerce has made the anarchist quest more vital than ever—but we must learn from the past not follow the spooks of tradition. It is time that anarchists recognise the valuable contributions of the American native school of individualist anarchist theory and take advantage of its ideas. It would be both futile and criminal to leave it to the capitalist libertarians, whose claims on 'Tucker and the others
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Notes
4. Reichert, page 69.
10. Stephen Pearl Andrews, Love Marriage and Divorce, and the Sovereignty of the Individual, a discussion ... (Boston, 1889) quoted in Martin, page 155.
11. Reichert, page 121.
12. Reichert, page 130.
15. Lysander Spooner, Natural Law (Boston, 1882) quoted in Reichert, page 136.
18. Rocker, page 133.

Larry Gambone

The Anarchist Movement in Chile

Mutualism was the first form that libertarianism took in Chile. The roots of this movement go far back into the Colonial Period. Prior to the victory of what the elite claimed was economic liberalism, Chilean artisans were organised into gremios or guilds. These were an important force in the independence struggle and the most radical sector of the revolutionary movement. The new post-colonial government paid no attention to the workers' patriotism and disbanded the guilds. The artisan's living standards went into steep decline and this period proved to be the most difficult stage in their history. With independence nothing was gained by the artisans.

The printers remained the most active of the trades and by 1845, some two decades after the banishing of the guilds, had produced a newspaper, El Artesano Opositor, which criticised the conditions of the working population. A year later an independent journal appeared called El Pueblo. Its motto was 'What are the People? Nothing! What will they be? Everything!' El Pueblo was influenced by the revolutionary events in France and French libertarianism, especially Proudhon and Lamennais. Proudhon’s writings were popular in Chile, as shown by contemporary booksellers’ catalogues. Even as early as the 1850s his writings were readily available in bookshops. (translations into Spanish occurred in the 1870s.) Lamennais’ book, Le Livre du Peuple was translated and published in Concepcion as early as 1843. In 1847 a Sociedad de Artesanos was founded in Santiago, but little is known about this organisation.

El Pueblo attracted a coterie of young libertarian-oriented republican intellectuals. They were interested in the concept of voluntary association. The republicans felt liberty without equality was meaningless and the only genuine way to achieve an egalitarian society was to create democratic associations among the people. They also believed the artisans should be politically autonomous and attempted to break them away from the aristocratic parties such as the Liberals and Conservatives.
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Notes
1. William 0. Reichert, _Partisans of Freedom_ (Bowling Green Ohio: Bowling Green
2. James J. Martin, _Men Against The State_ (DeKalb, Illinois: Adrian Allen Associates,
1953), page 12.
4. Reichert, page 69.
9. Eunice Schuster, _Native American Anarchism_ (Northampton, Massachusetts: Smith
College, 1932), page 108.
10. Stephen Pearl Andrews, _Love Marriage and Divorce, and the Sovereignty of the
Individual, a discussion ..._ (Boston, 1889) quoted in Martin, page 155.
11. Reichert, page 121.
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20. Emma Goldman, _The Place of the Individual in Society_ (Chicago: Free Society
Forum, no date), page 6.

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roots of this movement go far back into the Colonial Period. Prior to
the victory of what the elite claimed was economic liberalism, Chilean
artisans were organised into _gremios_ or guilds. These were an
important force in the independence struggle and the most radical
sector of the revolutionary movement. The new post-colonial
government paid no attention to the workers patriotism and
disbanded the guilds. The artisan's living standards went into steep
decline and this period proved to be the most difficult stage in their
history. With independence nothing was gained by the artisans.¹

The printers remained the most active of the trades and by 1845,
some two decades after the banishing of the guilds, had produced a
newspaper, _El Artesano Opositor_, which criticised the conditions of the
working population. A year later an independent journal appeared
called _El Pueblo_. Its motto was 'What are the People? Nothing! What
will they be? Everything!' _El Pueblo_ was influenced by the
revolutionary events in France and French libertarianism, especially
Proudhon and Lamennais. Proudhon's writings were popular in
Chile, as shown by contemporary booksellers' catalogues. Even as
early as the 1850s his writings were readily available in bookshops.
(translations into Spanish occurred in the 1870s.) Lamennais' book,
_Livre du Peuple_ was translated and published in Concepcion as
early as 1843. In 1847 a Sociedad de Artisanos was founded in
Santiago, but little is known about this organisation.

_El Pueblo_ attracted a coterie of young libertarian-oriented republican
intellectuals. They were interested in the concept of voluntary
association. The republicans felt liberty without equality was
meaningless and the only genuine way to achieve an egalitarian
society was to create democratic associations among the people. They
also believed the artisans should be politically autonomous and
attempted to break them away from the aristocratic parties such as
the Liberals and Conservatives.
The Equality Society

In 1850 two men returned to Chile from a lengthy sojourn in France. Francisco Bilbao and Santiago Arcos had been present in Paris during the revolution of 1848 and witnessed the role played by the artisans. They were familiar with the thoughts of Proudhon and had held discussions with Lamennais, becoming followers of the ex-priest. Bilbao can be considered fundamentally libertarian. On 10th April 1850 Bilbao, Arcos, the writer Eusebio Lillo and a number of other radical republicans held a meeting with representatives of the shoemakers, hatters, musicians, and tailors. They formed La Sociedad de la Igualdad (Equality Society, hereafter abbreviated to SI) with its journal, El Amigo del Pueblo.

The SI was devoted to the concept of 'associationalism', the complete sovereignty of the people and universal fraternity. It sought a project of moral, material and intellectual development for the artisans. The right of the people to organise, was promoted, something supposedly guaranteed by the Chilean Constitution, but ignored by the elite. The SI called for the creation of a real republic and the regeneration of Chile, which was to happen through voluntary association. In October 1850 they started a school for artisans, with courses in reading, arithmetic, music, English, dance, and ancient and Chilean history. The SI can be considered the model, in both organisational structure and ideology, for the future mutual aid societies.

This educational and moral theme runs right through Chilean libertarianism from the Igualistas to the CGT of the 1930s. As with the industrial revolution in Europe, industrialisation in Chile was very destructive of the family and society.

Alcoholism, drug addiction and family instability were brought on by the peasants' profound inability to adapt to urban life and work. The lack of education had a negative effect upon the working population for it broadens the range of salaries, undermines solidarity and makes the peasant-workers impervious to complex explanations and therefore open to demagogues. The workers' organisations sought to create working class citizens and the means to do this was to civilise them.

The SI under attack

The Liberal Party, which counted the artisans among its supporters, was not pleased with competition. They attempted to co-opt or destroy the SI. One way to cause disruption was to accuse them of being communists. To this slander Francisco Bilbao replied: "We are not communists and don't like communism, which we consider a false system".

Repression came soon. Police spies were used and thugs broke up meetings. The church intervened and denounced the SI from the pulpit. At one executive committee meeting sixteen men armed with clubs and swords broke in and threatened to kill the members. But the Igualistas were able to drive them off by defending themselves with ferocity. The attacks spread to the popular neighbourhoods, where the SI had many supporters, but the people responded in kind. The government, frustrated in its endeavour to snuff out this spark of liberty, made it illegal to carry arms and thus disarmed the opposition. In spite of this repression, the SI had three thousand members in Santiago.

The violence of the authorities increased. Houses were ransacked by the military or gangs of government supporters. Francisco Bilbao was forced into hiding and many Igualistas were arrested, imprisoned and tortured. On 20th April 1851 the SI's last major demonstration in Santiago was violently crushed by the State. This event marked the death of the organisation. It had been a short but fecund life. The SI sowed in Chile the seeds of mutual aid. One member of the group, Pablo Munoz, had formed a branch of the Equality Society in the town of La Serena, where he enrolled more than a hundred local artisans. This association was less of a political movement than the SI and more of a true mutual aid society. The La Serena society is the connecting link between the SI and the Sociedades Mutuales.

The first mutual aid societies

The repression of the Igualistas was part of a larger civil war occurring in Chile at the time. The winner of this unequal contest was the repressive General Manuel Montt. But even though the artisans were defeated and the country in the hands of a dictator, mutual aid was not forgotten. In 1853 the printers, influenced by the Peruvian-born mutualist, Victor Laynez, formed the first permanent mutual aid society. Its major function was to provide medical services for the members. Two years later a similar organisation was set up in Valparaiso.

The depression of 1858 led to more unrest, civil war and repression. The printers mutual suffered but managed to survive. The artisans
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The Union of Artisans was formed in 1862 in Santiago. This
organisation inspired development of societies in other parts of Chile.
La Union was a general mutual for all artisans of whatever trade. It
provided medical services and attempted to create a workshop for the
unemployed. An important goal was education, and so the Escola
Benjamin Franklin was formed to provide learning for the artisans
and their children.

By the early 1860s some seventy co-operatives, both consumer and
producer, had been launched, but they were not very successful.10 In
1863 the shoemakers and the tailors created their own mutuals.
Valparaiso was not far behind getting its Sociedad de Artesanos de
CopiapO in 1864 and in 1866-67 Talco, Chillan and several other
towns set up their own organisations.

Disputes involving politics and religion within the Talca Mutual
gave rise to a statute that allowed any member to belong to any church
or party and believe in whatever faith he wished, but the society itself
could not discuss or take sides on such matters. This concept was
made universal among the mutuals. Hence, religious and political
dissent was avoided and the mutual could concentrate upon its
true goal of aiding the membership.

The growth of mutualism

By 1870 there were thirteen mutuals,11 but economic depression
caused much suffering among the artisans. The mutuals were
important in alleviating misery – as much as they could within their
limited means. In spite of misfortune, support for mutualism grew
and more societies were formed by individual trades. Branches of La
Union also spread to more than a dozen cities. As well as the usual
educational, health and welfare functions, La Union created the
Workers Philharmonic Society in 1876.

The Philharmonic held classes in music and dance, sponsored
theatrical and musical events, recitals, poetry readings, choralso,
and festivities for family members. Mutuals also formed societies against
alcoholism and created their own pharmacies. Nor were mutual aid
societies restricted to independent workers. Toward the end of the
nineteenth century mutuals of labourers and white collar workers
were organised.

The mutuals created a kind of alternate culture or society. The
workers and artisans created their own world, a micro-world. Inside
these societies they created a parallel republic.12 The thinking behind
this micro-world was the idea that society could be transformed
peacefully through a civilising process which involved the application
of principals of liberty, mutuality, solidarity, education and self-help.

In 1879 the mutuals banded together and published El Taller (The
Workshop) which became the voice of mutualism. By 1880 there were
39 mutual aid societies.13 Another paper, La Razon, (Reason) more
educational in nature, appeared in 1884. Three years later, the
Workers Society for Mutual Aid was formed in Valparaiso. This
group is significant because it was the first mutual developed
specifically for women.

Juan Roldan was the most influential of the women mutualist
leaders. She was also director of the Filharmonica Jos Miguel Infant.
Out of this society in 1888, developed the first true women’s political
group, the Women’s Emancipation Society. Two years later Roldan
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situation of Chilean women, the advancement of education and
hygiene. Roldan was also a militant in the populist Partido
Democracia (PD) which was formed by the mutualists.

National federation

The mutualists were not left in peace, for a civil war broke out in
1891, resulting in the deaths of 20,000 workers and repressive laws
which limited the right to strike and to form associations. The mutuals
managed to pull through this disaster and proved their worth, since
they were the only force working to help the people in their plight.
Once again, in spite of violence and oppression, the movement grew.
But this time there arose a strong tendency demanding federation of
the multitude of societies. Already in 1888, mutuals began to federate
at the city and provincial levels. The call for federation was not
altogether ideological. Wretched living conditions and low wages put
a strain on the resources of the local mutuals. They needed to band
together for financial reasons.

This illustrated a flaw in mutualism. Most workers were too poor to
help themselves very much, let alone reach the long-term goal of a
mutalist republic. Three different solutions were proposed. The
anarcho-syndicalist solution was to force a wage rise so workers could
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to make the employer pay the workers’ mutual fees. The authoritarian socialists wanted to strip the mutuals of their rights and turn social services over to a State bureaucracy. As an example of the latter, Luis Recabarren, chief spokesman for the authoritarians “urged absolute opposition to anarchist initiatives”.¹⁴

On 23rd September 1894 all mutualist organisations in Chile sent delegates to Santiago to form the Workers’ Confederation which later became the Congreso Social Obrero (CSO). Chile now had a national federation of mutual aid societies. By 1900 there were 240 mutuals,¹⁵ the comparison with the 39 existing only twenty years previously, shows the spectacular growth of the movement. The mutuals under the CSO did not organise only the usual activities of education and insurance but also fought for social laws and protested the cost of living. In 1925 the CSO and several smaller federations united to form the National Mutualist Confederation which had more than 120,000 members.

We leave the mutuals at this point, not because they were no longer important or had been superseded but only because a new form of libertarianism had arisen. Revolutionary anarchism, a movement more ideological, more forceful, a movement which emphasised direct action and the long-term goal - abolition of the state and capitalism - to a greater degree than mutualism.

One should not, however, make the error of reducing popular movements to a kind of ‘social evolution’. Such evolutionism is favoured by marxist-oriented historians who claim a progressive development from anti-diluvian mutualism, to primitive anarchosyndicalism to finally (fanfare please!) modern trade unionism and the socialist state. This schema is little more than rationalisation. Mutualism was not a ‘stage of history’, but ideally suited the independent worker. Since artisans continued to be an important sector of Chilean population, mutualism persisted. And anarchism was not semi-proletarian primitivism, for Chilean anarchists were workers and not artisans or semi-proletarians.¹⁶

**Revolutionary anarchism**

*The Beginning Of Industrialisation*

The early period of industrialisation in Chile (1890-1910) saw a 50% growth in the labour force. While wages rose, so did inflation at an even greater rate, causing a drop in real wages. In the period 1911-25 workers spent 97% of their income on basic necessities.¹⁷

Industrialisation in Chile saw all the horrors associated with the industrial revolution in England such as slums, disease, a high mortality rate, prostitution, drunkenness and family break down.

This misery was coupled by a level of brutality on the part of the elite the British or American worker never experienced.¹⁸ A thin band of capitalism was being imposed (mostly by foreigners) upon a society which was essentially feudal in its attitudes. Capitalism requires the concept of citizenship - the free individual, maximising his advantage in a rational exchange. Someone who is guaranteed security, life and property under a rational system of laws. This existed only in a very rudimentary form, if at all, in Chile. The elite did not regard workers and peasants as citizens but as ‘human cattle’ and if these ‘cattle’ started demanding rights, well, mow them down with a Hotchkiss gun!

At the very beginning of this era (1890) a hundred nitrate workers in Iquique were shot by the army. Their ‘crime’ was going on strike. The seamen’s strike of 1903 saw at least forty workers killed. During the ‘Red Week’ of October 1905, a protest over inflation in Santiago, 200 people were shot by the troops. The worst example of this cruelty was the slaughter by machine-gun of 2,500 Iquique nitrate workers in 1907, known as the Santa Maria Massacre after the churchyard where the butchery took place. Given this catalogue of horrors, it is no wonder that many Chilean workers were attracted to a more militant form of libertarianism.

Earliest revolutionary anarchist influence came from Argentine radical literature. The first anarchist nucleus was organised by a Bakuninist Spaniard, Manuel Chinchilla. Carlos Jorquera, the first Chilean anarchist, was influenced by Chinchilla. These anarchists were associated with the Printers Union. In 1892 they formed the Centro de Estudios Sociales and a year later the first anarchist paper, *El Oprimo.* Jorquera formed the Maritime Union. The first attempted labour federation in Valparaiso, FUPTS, was lead by anarchists. Other anarchists who were within the CSO produced *El Grito del Pueblo* in 1896. One year later, there were more than a hundred organised anarchists in Santiago and Valparaiso. Kropotkin’s and Bakunin’s writings began appearing in pamphlet form about this time.

While influences came from outside, Chilean anarchism was essentially indigenous and was not subject to the anti-immigrant hostility of the local population. Being indigenous it was pragmatic, not wasting energy in doctrinal disputes or suicidal adventures such as the soviet in Argentina or the Brazilian revolt. Chilean anarchists were therefore never as ideological as those in other Latin
to make the employer pay the workers' mutual fees. The authoritarian socialists wanted to strip the mutuals of their rights and turn social services over to a State bureaucracy. As an example of the latter, Luis Recabarren, chief spokesman for the authoritarians “urged absolute opposition to anarchist initiatives”.14

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American countries and even though they suffered at the hand of the authorities, did not set themselves up for repression.16

Most of these early anarchists were young skilled workers who were mutualistas. They favoured an earthy and violent rhetoric in their attacks upon the corruption and injustices of Chilean society. As the Santiago weekly, La Tromba stated in 1898: "Nothing will be left of the political, economic and religious garbage of this sodomitic society ... Everything will be destroyed". Or, the same year in El Rebelde: "We wipe our arses on the paper with which you print your laws".20 For this last statement the authorities shut down the paper and jailed the editor. Two important anarchists of the formative period were Magno Espinoza of Rebelde and the trade unionist, Alejandro Escobar. In 1900 the theoretical journal, El Acrata appeared. (Acrata means ‘opposed to society’.) The visit of Italian anarchist Pietro Gori in 1901 also contributed to the development of Chilean anarchism.

From 1900 to 1910 the anarchists were the best organised of all the radical groups. They were strong in such trades as printing, baking, shoemaking, and the port workers of Valparaiso. There were anarchist coalminers at Concepcion. Escobar founded the first important resistance society, the Carpenters Union, which played a major role in the Santiago general strike of 1907. Anarchists were instrumental informing the Printers Federation in Santiago in 1902 which had seven thousand members.21 An early attempt at forming an anarcho-syndicalist federation occurred in 1906 with the formation of FTCh, the Workers Federation of Chile. Anarchists also led the Shoemakers Federation which helped organise FOCH, the first successful national trade union federation.

With the disintegration of the resistance societies after 1904 the anarchist movement went into temporary decline. The mancommunal movement was not specifically anarchist but some anarchists held important positions in it. After 1905 the general strike was generally accepted by the anarchists. The most important anarchist newspaper of the later period was La Batalla founded in 1913 and running until repressed in 1925.

Many young intellectuals became attracted to anarchism, especially after World War One. University and college students organised the Federation of Chilean Students (FECCH) as an anarchist union. Some important anarchist leaders of the Post-war period were Manual Rojas, a novelist who was later in the IWW, the writer Eugenio Gonzales-Rojas, Juan Chamorro, sailor and IWW leader, and Augusto Pinto, head of the Shoeworkers Union.

The Resistance Societies

The Resistance Societies (RS) were inspired by anarchists and influenced by the Argentine movement. A polemic ensued between the Mutualistas and Resistencias. Mutualists excluded the RS from their ranks in their 1901 conference, yet members acted as resistance societies as well. The first RS was formed in 1898 by railway workers. Soon after groups formed among shoemakers, coal miners, printers, bakers and carpenters. Escobar and Espinoza were important in the development of RS. Societies were concentrated in Central Chile and found chiefly among industrial workers. By 1900 there were thirty of them. This number mushroomed to 433 by 1910, with a total membership of 55,000.22 RS were decentralised, rotated leadership and practised autonomy. Out of the RS came a series of periodicals; El Alba (for coal miners), El Obrero Libre and La Agitacion. During this period, and up to the 1920s, the workers struggled to reduce the work day to eight hours and fought against such abuses as the ‘company store’ and the use of script for pay. They wanted a real cash wage that they could spend anywhere.

The first workers to win a strike were the printers. Strikes at this time were mini-civil wars since employers refused to bargain and could undermine strikes with strike-breakers and armed thugs. Workers broke machines and sometimes rioting and looting erupted. Labour laws had little effect and both workers and bosses preferred that the government keep out. Improvements in income or working conditions during this period tended to result from direct action at the workplace. Some strikes were successful and attempts to cut wages were beaten back.

In 1890 sailors in Iquique went on strike, demanding payment of wages in silver, not worthless paper. The sailors strike sparked a wave of unrest involving the nitrate miners and workers further south. The sailors won the strike, but a hundred nitrate workers were wounded by troops during a demonstration. Women in Valparaiso rioted over the high price of goods and fifty of them were killed by the military.23

Labour unrest occurred throughout the next decade, reaching a peak in 1907 with a march of 30,000 workers and their families through the streets of Santiago. An attempted general strike was broken, putting a momentary stop to the revolt. The general strike failed because of a lack of co-ordination among the RSs. This error was rectified in the future. Compounding the difficulties for the strikers, was the depression of 1907 and the massacre in Iquique.
American countries and even though they suffered at the hand of the authorities, did not set themselves up for repression.¹⁹

Most of these early anarchists were young skilled workers who were mutualistas. They favoured an earthy and violent rhetoric in their attacks upon the corruption and iniquities of Chilean society. As the Santiago weekly, La Tromba stated in 1898: "Nothing will be left of the political, economic and religious garbage of this sodomitic society ... Everything will be destroyed". Or, the same year in El Rebeldé: "We wipe our asses on the paper with which you print your laws".²⁰ For this last statement the authorities shut down the paper and jailed the editor. Two important anarchists of the formative period were Magno Espinoza of Rebeldé and the trade unionist, Alejandro Escobar. In 1900 the theoretical journal, El Acata appeared. (Acata means 'opposed to society'.) The visit of Italian anarchist Pietro Gori in 1901 also contributed to the development of Chilean anarcho-communism.

From 1900 to 1910 the anarchists were the best organised of all the radical groups. They were strong in such trades as printing, baking, shoemaking, and the port workers of Valparaíso. There were anarchist coalminers at Concepción. Escobar founded the first important resistance society, the Carpenters Union, which played a major role in the Santiago general strike of 1907. Anarchists were instrumental informing the Printers Federation in Santiago in 1902 which had seven thousand members.²¹ An early attempt at forming an anarcho-syndicalist federation occurred in 1906 with the formation of FTCh, the Workers Federation of Chile. Anarchists also led the Shoemakers Federation which helped organise FOCH, the first successful national trade union federation.

With the disintegration of the resistance societies after 1904 the anarchist movement went into temporary decline. The mancommunal movement was not specifically anarchist but some anarchists held important positions in it. After 1905 the general strike was generally accepted by the anarchists. The most important anarchist newspaper of the later period was La Batalla founded in 1913 and running until repressed in 1925.

Many young intellectuals became attracted to anarchism, especially after World War One. University and college students organised the Federation of Chilean Students (FECH) as an anarchist union. Some important anarchist leaders of the Post-war period were Manual Rojas, a novelist who was later in the IWW, the writer Eugenio Gonzales-Rojas, Juan Chamorro, sailor and IWW leader, and Augusto Pinto, head of the Shoeworkers Union.

The Resistance Societies

The Resistance Societies (RS) were inspired by anarchists and influenced by the Argentine movement. A polemic ensued between the Mutualistas and Resistencias. Mutualists excluded the RS from their ranks in their 1901 conference, yet mutuals acted as resistance societies as well. The first RS was formed in 1898 by railway workers. Soon after groups formed among shoemakers, coal miners, printers, bakers and carpenters. Escobar and Espinoza were important in the development of RS. Societies were concentrated in Central Chile and found chiefly among industrial workers. By 1900 there were thirty of them. This number mushroomed to 433 by 1910, with a total membership of 55,000.²² RSs were decentralised, rotated leadership and practised autonomy. Out of the RS came a series of periodicals; El Alba (for coal miners), El Obrero Libre and La Agitacion. During this period, and up to the 1920s, the workers struggled to reduce the work day to eight hours and fought against such abuses as the 'company store' and the use of script for pay. They wanted a real cash wage that they could spend anywhere.

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which, as one can well imagine, dampened any enthusiasm for militancy.

The period 1909-1914 saw the rebuilding of the RSs and continued growth of the mutuals. The latter were not affected by the repression of 1907-08. Many workers retreated back to the mutuals after the break up of their unions. But this retreat did not last, as union membership grew from 65,000 in 1909 to 90,000 in 1913. Anarchist influence in Valparaiso and Santiago was greater than ever, and the anarchists, through their resistance societies kept labour unionism alive in Chile in 1905-1916.

In spite of repression, by 1909 the workers were very active, with 29 strikes involving 200,000 workers. Once again, the wave of militancy was only temporary. The depression which occurred immediately at the outbreak of World War One, caused hardship for the workers and therefore a loss of union strength. The anarchists changed direction and formed tenant unions to reduce rents. They did not succeed in this endeavour, but did form the basis for future tenant unions in the 1920s.

**The mancomunales**

The mancomunales (brotherhoods) came out of the mutualist movement and served both as mutual aid societies and trade unions. Their main function was defending the membership, but co-operatives were also launched. The mancomunales were influenced by both the Resistance and the Mutuales. Many of the latter became brotherhoods and the mancomunales always practised mutual aid. They emphasised improvement in working conditions and safety standards, education of members and opposition to alcohol, gambling and prostitution. The funds for these organisations were never fraudulently misused but spent on schools, libraries, newspapers and mutual aid during sickness.

The brotherhoods federated. In 1904 the Gran Mancomunal de Obreras with 20,000 members, sections in sixteen cities and eleven publications was formed at a meeting in Santiago. While the resistance societies were local, the brotherhoods were organised on a territorial basis, uniting different trades, first on a citywide, then provincial and finally national level. They were the first true trade unions in Chile.

Mancomunales used direct action and allowed for a much greater level of organisation and solidarity than the Resistance Societies. The first mancomunal was formed in 1900 at Iquique, through the efforts of anarchists, by port workers and soon had six thousand members—the majority of the nitrate and maritime workers in the North. Their journals included *El Trabajo* of Iquique and *El Maritimo* of Antofagasta. The Iquique mancomunal organised the Mutualist Party in 1900 and produced a paper, *El Obrero Mancomunal*. A strike by the Iquique brotherhood in 1902 shut the port for sixty days. The strikers were supported by the PD as well as other worker groups. All the major strikes in the North (nitrate area) were due to the mancomunales. Nevertheless, they almost died out after the 1907 depression and military repression. Political chicanery involving the Radical and Socialist Parties did not help. The brotherhoods revived in 1916-18 and were involved in creating the Chilean Workers Federation.

**Anarchist students and teachers**

FECh, led mainly by anarchists and IWW, fought for reform of the university system—proposing autonomy of university, a university extension system and a revision of teaching methodology. A student strike was called to push for these reforms. It had much support until the government succeeded in dividing the ranks. FECh was seized by Communists in 1932 and the libertarian influence waned. The Teachers Association formed in 1922 was strongly mutualist and had anarchist and IWW influence, as did the Primary School Teachers Society founded in 1915. Like the student union, the teachers organisations ended up in Communist hands.

**Anarcho-syndicalism**

Anarcho-syndicalists proved to be the most dynamic and successful element in the working class from 1902 to 1927.

To divide the militant libertarians between 'anarchists' and 'anarcho-syndicalists' is not particularly accurate. The early anarchist movement organised the first militant trade unions. Very few anarchists of the period prior to 1920 were anti-syndicalist, for hard-line anarcho-communists and individualists were few in number. However, prior to World War One the labour movement had been fragmented (in spite of anarchist attempts to the contrary) and only in 1919 do we see a mass syndicalist federation arising in Chile. Thus, it is reasonable to characterise this latter period as a time of fully developed anarcho-syndicalism.
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As with the mutuals and mancomunales, syndicalist unions were not just about wages and working conditions, but also emphasised leisure and cultural activities and perceived a glaring need for constructive entertainment. The anarcho-syndicalists put on a plethora of readings, concerts, dances, plays and sports events.

During the general strike in Valparaíso in 1913 a central command of all the various unions was formed. This strike was the most significant of this period and with its sense of organisation was a foretaste of future anarcho-syndicalist methods. The railway workers organised the Grand Workers Federation in 1909 as a mutual. Five years later, the mancomunales and resistance societies were smashed by the government and these groups were allowed to join the ‘Grand’, which changed its name to Chilean Workers Federation. (FOCh) The union was an umbrella group containing all tendencies — mutualist, populist, anarchist and socialist, thus becoming the first true national labour federation. As militancy increased throughout the country, the FOCh radicalised.

Luis Recabarren and other socialists in the populist PD hived off to form the Socialist Workers Party. From 1912 onwards, the anarchists found themselves in dispute with a strong Marxist tendency trying to seize control of the workers movement and channel it in the direction of State Capitalism. The socialist’s main area of labour activity was organising within FOCh. They attacked mutualism as yellow and counter-revolutionary, and as the monkey stage of workers organisation. The socialists succeeded in splitting FOCh into two factions, one devoted to direct action and the other to mutualism. There were at this time over 338 mutual societies with a total of 98,000 members — much more than the trade unions. Opposition to the mutualist movement divided the population and did much harm. A division tore apart the popular movement and disoriented the working class. The loss is the lack of communication between the ‘traditional’ and ‘moderate’ with the popular movement, giving rise to grave consequences from the point of view of class autonomy and unity.

The militant faction of FOCh, an alliance of anarcho-syndicalists and state socialists had the upper hand. In 1919 the union adopted anarcho-syndicalist principles and a regional federal structure. FOCh had about 60,000 members. But the syndicalist FOCh was short lived, for it was soon taken over by the communists.

Most trade unions outside of FOCh in the period 1917-1922 were also anarcho-syndicalist. However, ideology was not considered as important as practical syndicalism. Stability and success of the union were above ideological considerations. This practical syndicalism was also very militant. Between 1916 and 1921 there were thirteen general strikes, 29 intersectoral strikes and 259 industry-wide strikes. During this period and for several years after, Anarchists enjoyed more prestige among workers in Santiago and Valparaíso than did the Marxists. Numerous periodicals were founded to expound the libertarian philosophy. To name but a few, *Verba Roja, Número, Acción Directa*, (the IWW journal) and *Mar y Tierra*.

The cost of living was a major issue. As a result, an unprecedented movement for popular unity arose, uniting anarchists, FOCh, Catholic unions, populists, socialists, the mutualist societies, professionals, students and the middle classes. Called the Asamblea Obrera de la Alimentación (AOA) it marked the highest level of popular unity in Chilean history. The AOA demanded abolition of taxes and duties on food and formation of free farmers markets in the cities. Demonstrations attracted more than 100,000 in Santiago in 1918 and 50,000 in Valparaíso in 1919. The failed general strike by FOCh in Santiago undermined AOA support and the movement was unable to push through its reforms. The coalition rapidly fell apart. Chilean anarchists could never again organise such a vast coalition, for the Communist Party introduced sectarianism and made such unity impossible.

**The IWW**

The Chilean IWW was first formed in Val in 1918 by dissatisfied anarchist dock workers. Members of the Marine Transport Workers Union of the American IWW encountered Chilean dock workers and sailors in the port city. Juan Chamorro was disappointed in FOCh, thought the IWW’s unitary union superior to federalism and helped organise the new union centre. Branches were also developed in Iquique and Antofagasta. At a national convention in 1919, the Chilean IWW was officially launched and soon expanded to nineteen cities. Total membership stood at about 10,000 at this period.

In 1920 the IWW led a three month long strike to protest the export of grain during a food shortage. The government repressed both the IWW and anarchists, going so far as to frame the Wobblies with a planted bomb. They failed to destroy the movement. The Chilean IWW joined the IWMA at its formation in 1922. Hot on the heels of the 1920 post-war depression the employers went on the offensive and from 1921 to 1923 were successful in beating back the unions.
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There was a massacre at San Gregorio on 4th February 1921 with 565 nitrate miners killed.\textsuperscript{40} IWW members were not involved, but this gives an idea of the situation in which workers lived at the time.

Even though readily co-operating with the IWW, most anarchist unions did not join the organisation out of fear of losing their autonomy. In 1924 the IWW adopted anarcho-communism and radically decentralised its structure. But this did not preserve the union. Stuck between the communists and the anarchists, the IWW lost many members to the syndicalists except for those in San Antonio and Valparaiso. The Ibanez dictatorship helped to destroy the IWW. The Wobblies revived briefly in 1942-45. One of the causes of the break up of the IWW was the dispute over regional (federal) versus unitary union structure. The port workers, bakers and printers hived off forming a new organisation.

**Communists versus anarchists**

In 1921 the Communists under Recabarren took over FOCh and a battle commenced between the libertarian and authoritarian wings of the labour movement. This struggle saw the communist unions on one side opposed to the IWW and anarchists on the other. The communists attacked and beat the anarchists at a rally in Valparaíso in 1923, an act typical of their methods. The Community Party press slandered anarchists and Wobblies as ‘police agents’ and ‘fascists’. This was not an isolated incident, but part of a world-wide conspiracy to either seize or destroy democratic and libertarian trade unions. The FOCh became a tool of the Communist Party and non-communist officials were purged. Many non-communist unions left and the federation was severely weakened.

The Communist Party forced ‘ideological fine tuning’ upon the labour movement, which up to this time, had showed little inclination toward sectarian foolishness. Thus by 1924 Communists, Wobblies, anarcho-syndicalists, Democrats and Catholics had defined themselves ideologically and unification of the labour movement became impossible.\textsuperscript{41} Once again, Communist Party manipulation was not only a Chilean phenomenon. Prior to Bolshevism, the various protest movements, in spite of any differences they might have, saw themselves belonging to the same family. Workers would flow in and out of different organisations, or belong to several different ones at the same time. This pragmatic, non-sectarian practice was replaced by abuse and hatred.

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**Repression and the coup of 1927**

Alessandri gained the presidency in 1920 on a pseudo-populist reform platform, however, most of the desired changes did not materialise. The military revolted in January 1925, insisting the reforms take place. Its goal at this point, was co-opting rather than repressing labour. Alessandri resigned and fled the country. A junta of admirals and colonels ruled. A *coup d'état* by Colonels Marmaduke Grove and ‘Paco’ Ibanez resulted in Alessandri being invited to govern once more. The number of strikes increased, reaching a peak in May. Most of these strikes were by anarchist unions and not FOCh.

Workers at the Marusia mine in March 1925, fearing slaughter by the army, defended themselves with rifles and dynamite, killing 36 soldiers.\textsuperscript{42} This was one of the few times workers went on the offensive and were not simply victims of the State. Alessandri decided to put a halt to the strikes and on 4th June six to eight hundred nitrate miners were gunned down by troops at La Coruna. The anarchist press was closed and mass arrests occurred in Iquique and other cities. Government repression brought the 1925 strike wave to an abrupt end. In September Alessandri resigned once more, leaving power in the hands of Ibanez who became a dictator. His rule was ‘legitimised’ in 1927 through a presidential election.

The labour movement went into decline after the repression of 1925. But the government was not the sole cause of this. The economy was in depression and the unity of labour had been broken. Organised workers were split six ways — communists versus anarchists, federalists versus industrial unionists and mutualists versus syndicalists. The communists, for all their machinations, were in worse shape than the anarchists, as FOCh lost most of its support.

The government passed a social security law demanding obligatory payments to the state. The mutuals too became active, joining hands with the syndicalists in an attempt to defeat the legislation. The campaign failed since the CP-dominated FOCh refused to support the general strike of 20th February 1926 called against the institution of government social security.

A new central, the Regional Workers Federation (FORCh), formed in 1926 composed of anarcho-syndicalist unions and IWW dissidents. The union united both the regional and industrial union concepts. FORCh didn’t have time to organise. On 23rd February 1927 Colonel Ibanez formally abolished the labour movement and union offices were raided, anarchist groups disbanded and all their journals shut down.
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Ibanes and the corporate state

Generally it is believed that repression during the Ibanes years caused the decline of the anarchist movement. But labour had suffered far worse before and come out stronger than ever. The decentralised nature of Chilean labour made it difficult to destroy. It had been beaten down and revived again in 1907, 1914, 1920 and 1925. All-in-all 978 people were arrested and interned and only 12% of these were anarchists, the largest group being communists. Nor were there any massacres. During the dictatorship, the anarchist printers and stevedore unions functioned and anarchists marched openly during the Mayday demonstration of 1928. Strikes were organised and the periodical Rebellion appeared.

Something else was responsible for the defeat, for the effects of the persecution were of secondary importance in comparison with the consequences of the government’s social policies. Many anarchists were co-opted by corporatism and the movement divided and weakened. Ibanes was a ‘Paco’, (a rude term for a member of the Carabineros or State Police) and since pacos came from humble backgrounds, he had some sympathy for the workers. But this sympathy took the form of corporatism rather than anarchist-syndicalism. Ibanes and his fellow officers were not conservatives who wished a return to feudal labour relations, but wanted a corporate state to provide improvements for the workers and integrate the unions. They were fascists in the genuine sense of the word.

As a first step toward creating a corporate state, Ibanes decreed a series of social laws, legislation which had been talked about for years, but never acted upon, due to opposition by the oligarchy. He then called an election and the workers overwhelming supported him (winning 74% of the vote). This landslide victory is understandable given this was the first time a government had ever done anything substantial to help the working class. The new state also created so-called legal unions. The laws under which these unions were to obliged to operate made many anarchist unions illegal (one of the restrictions being that unions had to be strictly anti-ideological). This measure was to be the undoing of the anarcho-syndicalist movement.

Anarchism and corporatism

Two main tendencies existed within anarcho-syndicalism. One of these was revolutionary syndicalism, the other was ‘sindicalismo puro’. However, the distinctions were not cut and dried. Sindicalismo puro sought immediate improvements in wages and working conditions and was not concerned with revolution or final goals. This group maximised the anti-ideological and anti-political attitudes found generally within Chilean syndicalism, rejecting ideology and politics out of fear of breaking workers’ unity. Ibanes was well aware of the differences between the puros and the revolutionaries and took advantage of the situation.

Most syndicalist activities were of an immediate nature and did not justify the existence of a revolutionary principle within the unions. The revolution was something for the future, not now, and this resulted in an apolitical attitude and a concentration on the day-to-day. The revolutionary and non-revolutionary anarchists often ended up sounding and acting the same. Ideologically well-versed revolutionary anarchists were actually few in number and there was a general vagueness of principles within the labour movement. Thus, the anarchist unions were reduced to organisations fighting for better wages and working conditions and for many militants the ‘final goal’ was reduced to the formation of a pure, powerful, democratic and unified trade union movement, or the internal life of the union itself.

Before Ibanes, all improvements came through strikes. Anarchists were opposed to the legislative process and this reflected the reality of the time, for the government only oppressed the workers. But the Ibanes social laws changed this. For the puros the new laws were seen as an effective tool to help them fight the capitalists and, with a few exceptions, they did not buy the ‘harmony of interests’ ideology of corporatism. The anarcho-syndicalist idea of an economy controlled by trade unions also had some superficial similarities to corporatism, enough to confuse many workers.

Thus, the largest section of the anarcho-syndicalist movement, the puros, were swept up into the ‘legal union’ structure. The puros did not seem to think this was a break with past ideology, and in the majority of cases, we see a coherence in the actions and words before and after the appearance of the Ibanes reforms.

Not only the union movement was effected by corporatism. Disputes arose within the mutualist movement as well. The directorate of the Mutualist Confederation wanted the membership to demonstrate support for Ibanes in 1927. Many members were opposed, for corporatism was a danger to the mutualist movement, taking away the reason for its existence. A pure mutualista slate fought
Ibanes and the corporate state

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The slate won the election, but then turned around and supported
Ibanez anyway.

The decline of anarcho-syndicalism

The anarchists never fully recovered from Ibanez. Even though they
re-grouped in 1931-32 to form a new syndicalist federation, and were
still more powerful than the communists, they lost their leadership
role. The largest union centre was that of the legal unions, the
National Confederation of Legal Unions, organised in 1932 out of
two different legal union federations. The Legales outnumbered the
anarchists more than five to one. The Socialist Party soon came to
dominate the legal unions, as many of the Socialist militants were
themselves former puro anarcho-syndicalists.

In 1931 the General Labour Confederation (CGT) was formed,
uniting the IWW remnants with FORCh and several other
anarcho-syndicalist unions. Rather than based upon the IWW
concept, the CGT borrowed from the regionalist concepts of the
Argentine anarcho-syndicalist centre, FORA. The new federation
had 25,000 members including some of the most skilled and highly
paid workers in Chile. The 35 different unions included the
carpenters, electricians, and printers. The CGT's journal was
La Protesta, which became the most important libertarian newspaper in
Chile. The Communists tried to revive FOCh but weren't as
successful as the anarchists were with the CGT. By 1936 the CGT
still had 15,000 members with federations in 10 cities and affiliates
in four others. They had a number of successes in reducing the work
week and raising salaries. Several other anarchist unions remained
independent of the CGT - such as the plasterers' union who had their
own newspaper, published until 1955.

In 1936 the Communist, Socialist, independent, legal and CGT
unions met to form a new federation. The CGT refused to join. Not
out of fear of Communist domination, but opposition to the 'legal
unions'. The CP, radicals and socialists supported the legal unions
and so the largest group of organised workers ended up in the pocket
of the political parties and not as allies of the syndicalists.

By 1946 the CGT was a mere shell of its former self. Part of this
decline was due to the fact the CGT suffered more repression than
any other union. Many of the poor who supported its campaigns
against taxes, high rent and inflation were drawn to the Popular Front
victories in government and abandoned the anarchists. The absorption
by the parties of the 'legal unions' also undermined them. In its 1931
congress the CGT voted in favour of libertarian communism as the
final goal of the movement. They proposed a more ideological
approach at the very moment when the dominant tendency within
Chilean anarcho-syndicalism was in the opposite direction.

Virtually all of Chile's labour unions came together in 1953 and
formed CUT. This time the CGT joined. The CUT executive in
1953 had four anarchist members, Ramon Dominguez, Hector
Durán, Ernesto Miranda and Celio Poblete. They won about 8% of
the vote, more than either the Radical Party or Christian Democratic
candidates. Within the new federation, the anarchists controlled the
shoemakers, printers and maritime workers' unions. Although a
minority, they had an important role to play, during the early years of
CUT, the principle opposition to the communists came from the
anarcho-syndicalists. CUT was dominated by the communists in
alliance with the heretofore anti-communist socialists.

With the new level of labour unity giving them confidence, workers
became restive. Tension mounted as strikes and demonstrations
became common. 'Paco' Ibanez was president again, this time by
election and not force of arms. Remembering the repression of 25
years previously, workers readied themselves to revolt. In July 1956
the membership forced CUT to proclaim a general strike which shut
down the entire country for two days. But the communist and socialist
majority soon agreed to end the strike, even though Ibanez had talked
of handing the government over to CUT. Another general strike was
called in 1957 but workers no longer trusted CUT and the strike failed
to gain momentum.

After this failure most anarcho-syndicalists withdrew from CUT
and many of those remaining tended to boycott union elections. By
1960 anarchist influence in the Chilean workers movement became
minimal (in 1962 the anarchists got 2% of the vote in CUT, but
this was still more than twice that of the Trotskyists). Anarchists
who had been in CUT formed the CNT in 1960 and joined ICFTU
and ORIT, but Victor Alba writing in 1968 stated that its
development has been slow.

The Allende regime

By the time the Popular Unity government of Salvador Allende was
elected in 1970, the labour and popular movements were dominated
in the Confederation election to ‘save the movement from politics’. The slate won the election, but then turned around and supported Ibanez anyway.

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leninism came from the moderate left -the social democratic faction
within the Socialist Party, the Radical and Christian Democratic
parties. The anarchists were too marginalised to promote an
alternative to state capitalism. Nonetheless, there were developments
similar in spirit to the old anarcho-syndicalist movement. These
occurred spontaneously.

In October of 1972 a more or less general strike of employers, the
'Bosses Strike' occurred against the Popular Unity government.
Workers responded by occupying factories and organising production
on their own. In order to co-ordinate distribution of products and to
defend themselves against attack, workers organised Cordones
industriales. In the countryside the council movement or Consejos,
similar in function to the Cordones was organised.

The poblaciones (poor working class neighbourhoods) saw the
creation of comandos comunales which by-passed the inefficient
government organisations called JAPS. Here were proclaimed the
existence of 'self-governing neighbourhoods' and for the first time,
people who had previously been excluded from participation in social
life were able to make decisions concerning the most basic realities of
their daily lives. MIR tried to dominate them, so even the comandos
were not free of politicians.

During the coup the areas where the cordones and comandos
operated were singled out for attack by the military. They were also
the areas where the greatest resistance occurred. The largest number
of victims came from the poblaciones. It is ironic to think that had a
successful Chilean revolution occurred these very same people might
well have become the first victims of the 'proletarian dictatorship'.
Just like the anarchist sailors at Kromstadt or the anarchists in the
Cuban revolution.

After the golpe

The libertarian left began to re-organise in 1979, some six years after
the military take-over. An umbrella group, Socialist Ideas and Action
(PAS) was formed uniting long time anarchist militants and
libertarian socialists – independents in the Unidad Popular
coalition. These latter were former members of the left-wing
split-off from Christian Democracy, MAPU. In July 1982, PAS held
a national conference in Santiago and produced a Declaration of
Principles. This stated that the group wished for a new social order
based on the free federation of the people for mutual aid and
co-operation in the production of social wealth. They also sought a
further development of neighbourhood autonomy and immediate
recallability for union officials. PAS, at this time had to work as an
underground organisation.

In a document released in November of 1982, PAS stated that the
Pinochet regime was most likely to restore democracy in the face of
growing unrest rather than risk a social explosion. They also felt that
the re-establishment of democracy would in itself lead to an explosion
as the movement re-emerges into the open as the flame hits the air.

The return of democracy

The re-establishment of parliamentary democracy did not lead to a
social explosion, in fact the opposite occurred. This is
understandable. Chileans by 1989, had gone through some twenty
years of violent upheaval and only wanted social peace and
normalisation. Nonetheless, anarchist groups continue to produce
propaganda and to participate actively in social struggles. El Acute
was re-established in 1994 by the KAS group in Santiago. Like its
predecessor of 1900, it concentrates on the more theoretical aspects
of anarchism. Syndicalism is favoured and among other things, the
group has been active in protesting insanitary conditions in maximum
security prisons.

The Sociedades Mutuales still function, and in a society where the
welfare state is practically non-existent, mutual aid plays a much
greater role than elsewhere. Co-operatives, both agricultural and
consumer, are found the length and breadth of Chile.

Other libertarian developments have also occurred. Christians and
ex-marxist-leninists who rejected the vanguard party formed local
'base committees' working in the poblaciones. They function as
mutual aid societies and centres to organise local issues. Free market
libertarianism is of growing interest among a certain sector of the
professional middle class. The Green movement outdistanced the
Communist Party in the last presidential elections. Most of these
environmentalists may be authoritarian, but a decentralist,
local-control faction also exists. One example of this is a group which
encourages intensive gardening in the poblaciones, both as good
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Hong Kong and China: what’s new(s)?

As the television cameras recorded on 30th June, the transfer of sovereignty over Hong Kong island, Kowloon, and the New Territories from England to China was at least stiff, punctiliously formal, and thus flat; at worse, altogether artificial, and thus phoney. In either case it was anti-climactic for both Americans and Chinese, coming as it did at the end of six-month media blitzes in both the US and China.

Beginning in January 1997, the US print and broadcast media devoted a great many column inches, and much time, to speculating on the colony’s future after 1st July, almost all of it worriedly, especially on the topic of democracy. Given how little Hong Kong has affected and will directly affect the average American, and given how little attention is paid to many non-democratic regimes elsewhere in the world, the continuous media blitz must have seemed surprising, at least at first blush.

To be sure, the Chinese official media also made much of the reversion during the same period – although not expressing concern about the future of Hong Kong’s ‘democracy’ – but in the Chinese case the attention was understandable: with ever-increasing commercialism, deepening environmental degradation, and a continuously-widening gap between the haves and have nots, the government manipulated the symbolism of the final lowering of the Union Jack in an attempt to generate some patriotism to divert attention away from China’s growing social, economic, political and moral problems.

The Chinese patriotic propaganda campaign was largely a failure. After the obligatory toast celebrating Hong Kong’s imminent return to the Motherland, my Shanghai hosts – businessmen and officials – at banquets in May and June admitted that they saw the soon-to-be Special Administrative Region as competition more than anything else, and a few of them allowed (more privately) that if the central government showed too much favouritism toward Hong Kong, well, then, a resurgent Shanghai might just attempt to secede, and petition
49. Angel, page 218.
50. Alex, page 98.
51. Albert.
52. Angel, page 218.
54. Point Blank, NMG, page 17.
55. Re-emerge, NMG.

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The Chinese patriotic propaganda campaign was largely a failure. After the obligatory toast celebrating Hong Kong’s imminent return to the Motherland, my Shanghai hosts – businessmen and officials – at banquets in May and June admitted that they saw the soon-to-be Special Administrative Region as competition more than anything else, and a few of them allowed (more privately) that if the central government showed too much favouritism toward Hong Kong, well, then, a resurgent Shanghai might just attempt to secede, and petition...
the US for admission as the fifty-first state (said not altogether in jest, I believe).

In remote rural areas during the same period I encountered different responses, namely ignorance of the forthcoming event, or indifference to it. Many villagers were not aware the reversion was to take place, and few among those who did attached any significance to the event. Hong Kong had not and would not have any impact on their lives, and might as well have been on Mars as on the Southern tip of their country. Moreover, they perceived Hong Kong people as no more like themselves than any other foreigners.

Migrant workers in the South, especially in the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone, had a still different, rather more humorous response: learning that China was taking over Hong Kong on July 1st, hundreds of them believed a widespread rumour that England was going to invade China on July 2nd in retaliation, and consequently left their jobs along the purported invasion route in droves, to the extreme consternation of their employers.

The US media blitz was far more successful: anti-Chinese sentiments are higher now in America than at any time since the early 1950s, when the ‘blue ants’ replaced the ‘Yellow Peril’ and Fu Manchu’s successors began training the Manchurian candidate. The success is due, of course, to the media’s skill at manipulating and/or suppressing facts, and all but ignoring how things might have looked from a Chinese perspective. Some examples:

1) On democracy. Many Americans believed that because Hong Kong was under British control, it must have enjoyed something like British representative democracy, and the US media did little to overcome this mis-perception. Every educated Chinese, however, knows full well that for 151 of the 156 years of British rule, citizens of Hong Kong had no meaningful voice in government whatsoever, and hence have much justification for questioning the sincerity of the British – and the US – in their professed concern to protect the ‘democratic rights’ of Hong Kong’s five million people. Moreover, the US media made much of China’s appointment of an interim legislature to replace the sitting legislature after 1st July, but were overwhelmingly silent about the fact that British Governor Christopher Patten unilaterally changed the rules in 1994 about how that sitting legislature and its successors were to be elected, and Beijing responded in kind. ‘Democracy’ may indeed recede in the former Crown Colony, but worries about it are surely premature. The

Chinese have promised that the elections of 1998 will be full and fair, and so, at the least, a wait-and-see attitude, rather than hysteria, would seem called for, especially when it is remembered that it is the Hong Kong engine that largely drives the mainland economy, and that Taiwan will be watching very carefully for any changes in the social, economic, or political milieu there.

2) Freedom of the Press is supposedly endangered because of a new law prohibiting the defamation of high Chinese government officials. Being ‘Orientals’, the Chinese of course found a sneaky way to do this, namely, by taking the extant British law on public defamation and keeping it intact, except for inserting ‘Chinese government officials’, and striking ‘The Royal Family’.

3) Freedom of Assembly. Again, much has been made of new Chinese laws for Hong Kong requiring official permission to hold demonstrations and rallies, and greatly restricting ties between local and overseas political organisations. What was not reported was that new Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa has stated repeatedly that the new law on demonstrations is patterned on that of England – and Canada and Australia to boot. And surely curbing foreign links to domestic political parties is a great infringement on political freedom; just ask any of the Chinese or Chinese-American folk accused of shovelling money from the Chinese government to the Democratic National Committee. And the double standard doubles again when one reflects on the benign response to the millions of dollars dumped into the US political machinery by the Taiwan lobby over the years.

The list of distortions, omissions, and hypocrisy in the portrayal of the Hong Kong situation by the US media could go on, but there is a larger question: Why was (and is) it being done?

One reason is that some members of the US elite see China as an economic threat to US economic supremacy, and any threats to the all-good US can only come from one evil empire or another. In addition to the then-Soviet Union, Japan bashing was a popular sport among economists, academics, pundits, and policy-makers in the 1980s – i.e., when Japan was riding an economic wave, and out-performing the US in virtually every productive area. The wave has crested, and so have most of the media-induced anti-Japanese sentiments. In the 1990s, Chinese economic ripples are on the horizon, necessitating the designation of another enemy: there cannot be any legitimate challenges to US dominance in any area.
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A second reason, related to the first, is that Hong Kong has long since ceased being a major supplier of toys, clothing, Christmas ornaments and small appliances; these manufactures have now moved to the North, on the Chinese mainland. Hong Kong still engages in production, but it is mostly hi-tech, value-added manufacturing, and the bulk of the economy has shifted to services, especially to multi-faceted financial services. The former colony is a major player in the arena in which the trans-national corporations now hold their games, and these corporations don’t want any changing of the rules of the games that might restrict in any way their search for profits. Hence the Chinese government must be disabused of any idea that some of the fruits of the Hong Kong economy might be taxed to provide some social services for the 1.2 billion – and growing – Chinese peoples, services that are now being lost in China at a rate even exceeding that in the US.

The Hong Kong situation is not the only issue used by the US media to exacerbate anti-Chinese feelings. There has been a continuous hullabaloo about the failure of the Chinese government to curb the manufacture and sale of pirated tapes and CDs. But the Chinese know well that however callous they may appear toward supporting artistic creativity, the real economic action lies in bio-technology, especially in foods and medicines, which moves the issue from entertainment to life necessities. They also know full well they cannot compete successfully in these areas, and that their peoples will not be able to afford the patented fruits thereof by others. What ‘intellectual property rights’ means is that those who have the patents have the ‘right’ to charge whatever they wish for these necessities of life.

There has also been much hand-wringing rhetoric about Chinese arms sales, supposed restrictions on religious expression, sabre-rattling about Taiwan on occasion, trade restrictions, and more. On most of these issues the Chinese voice has not been heard, with good reason: the Chinese can make altogether legitimate responses to these charges, and they can do so without invoking that queer entity called ‘Asian values’, as the above example of intellectual property rights makes clear.

There are only two issues on which the Chinese side has been fairly well represented in the US media: Tibet, and the treatment of dissident patriots like Han Dongfang, Wei Jingsheng, and Wang Dan. These are also the only two issues on which the Chinese governmental responses – chauvinistic in the former, despotic in the latter, self-serving in both – can easily be seen to be morally indefensible; which can hardly be coincidental.

For myself, I believe democracy has a future in Hong Kong, but that is not saying a great deal, because it will be democracy very much like that currently obtaining in the US: a hollow democracy, dominated by money, and manipulated by those who have it, or serve those who do. The great majority of Hong Kong proponents of democracy, like Tung Chee-hwa himself, Joseph Yam, Anson Chan, and others, are well-to-do members of the Hong Kong elite, and do not espouse any populist ideas. There are some notable exceptions, of course, but in general Hong Kong’s leaders appear to have learned a lesson from places like Singapore – a lesson that their Beijing brethren have not mastered – namely, that representative rule by an elite can be just as or more effective in controlling an economy and a population as an non-elected one-party dictatorship, while simultaneously claiming moral as well as political legitimacy for themselves.

Moreover, the platform adopted unanimously at the recently concluded fifteenth Party Congress in Beijing provides manifold warrants for people of good will to fear, not that Chinese hard-line communist ideology is going to overwhelm Hong Kong, but rather that Hong Kong laissez-faire capitalist ideology is overwhelming China. Privatisation has already been going on for the past five years at a pace that would make Margaret Thatcher green with envy, and, according to Party economists and Politburo members, at least thirty-five million workers in state enterprises are ‘no longer needed’. After ‘privatisation’, the new owners can ‘out-source’ many tasks and functions formerly performed and served by the work unit, after which ‘down-sizing’ will eliminate the no-longer-needed former state-workers.

Another word now common in discussing Chinese political and economic matters can only be read with either irony, or as Orwellian: some high-ranking Party members – far fewer now, after the fifteenth Congress – have long maintained that Chinese workers were the Party’s base, and abandoning them was simultaneously to abandon its moral raison d’être; these thoroughly committed Marxists are referred to as ‘the conservatives’.

Even without high-placed Party champions, however – ‘conservative’ or otherwise – the 35 million ‘unneeded’ workers must renew the age-old struggle for economic justice forcefully, because the employment problem in China is growing increasingly grave (as well as unjust). It is not simply that these 35 million must seek new jobs. They must compete for jobs with the 72 million new job-seekers projected to come on the market between 1995-99, and a projected
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One minimally bright spot on this otherwise bleak economic horizon is that Chinese workers are indeed beginning to demand justice. Shortly after Liberation in 1949, the Party established a labour arbitration committee, but abolished it in 1956 because there could not be, of course, any genuine conflicts between workers and their party/government representatives of the Workers’ State. The committee was re-established with the new Constitution of 1983, but was seen as purely a formal fillip toward democratic procedures. But in 1994 over a thousand cases were brought to this committee, and more than double that number in 1995; in 1996 the committee had to take up a record 9,737 cases. When coupled with an increasing number of reports of wildcat strikes, demonstrations (including peasants), riots over failure to pay wages or for crops (ditto), and attacks on local Party headquarters for the corruption or incompetence, or both, of Party cadres (ditto again), we have some reason for hope that the Chinese situation may improve for the vast majority of its peoples.

And if it does, we might then hope in turn that China will indeed exert an influence on Hong Kong.

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• Comments on The Raven 36

Brian Bamford’s ‘Street-wise South of the Sierras’ in The Raven 36 is an incisive analysis of the differences between the Spanish and British anarchist movements. This comment is not to disagree with it, but to complement it.

First, to correct the impression that Stuart Christie announced his intention to assassinate Franco on the Let Me Speak television show. In fact, when he appeared among other young anarchists on the show he said nothing at all. Between the recording of the show and the broadcast he had been arrested in Spain, so whatever he said was edited out.

Second, it might be useful to rehearse the origins of the Syndicalist Workers’ Federation, of which both Brian Bamford and Stuart Christie were members at the time. When I first encountered Freedom Press in 1944, War Commentary was written by people who all looked fondly on anarchist achievements in the Spanish revolution, but who (as I later learned) were divided in opinion about whether the British anarchist movement should or should not be organised like the Spanish. The difference cannot be seen in terms of anarcho-syndicalism versus anarcho-pacifism, since those against the Spanish model included Philip Sansom (author of Syndicalism: the workers’ next step and publisher of The Syndicalist newspaper) and the fiercely anti-pacifist Albert Meltzer.

In early 1945 the Spanish-minded comrades (if I may so call them) attempted to seize control of Freedom Press but were thwarted, and went off to publish their own paper, Direct Action, and to found an organisation initially called the Anarchist Federation of Britain (of which I had a membership card until I had a chance to investigate its origins). The AFB changed its name to the Syndicalist Workers’ Federation in recognition that many members were not anarchists.*

The difference between a ‘street-wise’ Spanish anarchist organisation and the ‘isolated ineptitude’ of British anarchism (I use Bamford’s terms) is cultural. A lot of facile rubbish is written about ‘national characteristics’ and our propaganda is directed at people alive now,

* I heard speakers for the AFB advocating ‘government from below’ in which basic decision-making units would be workshop committees sending mandated, instantly recallable delegates to regional committees, and so on up to a level where public servants would carry out the decisions of the majority of workshop committees. This is syndicalism, but not anarchism. The aim is not to be rid of coercive institutions, but to bring coercive institutions under the collective control of the workers.
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In Spain, since the defeat of the Moorish Empire, the culture has been one of intolerance in which people learned the ‘street-wise’ habit of either conforming or keeping stumm.

In England, the Spanish Inquisition held sway from 1554 to 1558 when Mary I was married to Philip II of Spain. But then the people who were killed for refusing to conform turned out to have been on the winning side and became cultural heroes. Foxe’s Book of Martyrs (1563) was a best-seller in both England and Scotland and since then it has been a rule of British orthodoxy to admire the unorthodox who are prepared to suffer for their beliefs.

This cultural difference largely accounts for the difference between ‘street-wise’ Spanish anarchism and ‘stand-up-and-be-counted’ British anarchism. Murray Bookchin, in The Spanish Anarchists: the heroic years 1868-1936, writes of the FAI convening local assemblies “to allow for a full expression of rank-and-file views”. In Britain it is the leaders of the Conservative Party who are seen as having a duty to find out what ordinary members think. Among anarchists, the idea of leaders powerful enough to ‘allow’ a full expression of rank-and-file opinion is seen as somehow incompatible with anarchism.

Of course there is no logical argument that an organisation must resemble what it aims for. A monolithic, hierarchical organisation may well have a better hope of moving towards anarchy than a movement which is organised anarchistically. But a huge cultural barrier must be overcome if the ‘isolated ineptitude’ of British anarchism is to be exchanged for the ‘street-wise’ attitude of Spain.

Donald Rooum

If someone asked me why I am an anarchist I would have to say it is a matter of spirituality, that is how I understand my place in the universe. And this understanding leads to my sense of message to give the glad tidings to my fellows. I read the works of past writers on anarchism and these lead to a sense of creativity and depth in my thinking. Just as artists and composers express their sense of art as a means of comprehension of the world around them.

Like Monet painting the same object over and over again from different angles, in different seasons, in different light, or a composer like Vaughan Williams, with others, collecting our national folk songs not merely to reproduce in orchestral form – which he did – but to go on to produce major works which express the spirituality of his being.

I mention Vaughan Williams particularly because, as Wilfred Mellers expresses in his book Vaughan Williams and the Vision of Albion his understanding of the depth of RVW spirituality, this despite the fact RVW “was a Christian agnostic, a disillusioned theist; by birth a countryman from rural Gloucestershire, but by nature a Londoner, a man of the city; by temperament an uncommon common man…” (Stephen Town in Journal of the RVW Society, No. 10, October 1997).

Like all of us anarchists, complex collections of origins, experiences, thoughts and actions. But it is a good description of what anarchists are or may strive to become – we are not an elite, merely uncommon persons.

I gain enjoyment from looking at art, by listening to music. Both aid my processes of thinking and help develop my sense of creativity and, in my quieter moments, my sense of spirituality – in some senses my religion, for that is how I see my anarchism, as a secular religion, and as a humanist too I have long got over the need to justify my religiosity in arguments over atheism versus deism or, as a sociologist, a need to justify my moral philosophy in terms of class and status as apparently so many so-called class struggle anarchists need to.

It is simply a question of is something right or wrong? Is such and such conduct honourable? I am a free individual. I make my own religion as I go along. To revise Martin Luther: Here I stand. I can do no other. I am an anarchist.

Peter Neville
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Donald Rooom

I am puzzled by the comments made by Charles Crute and Donald Rooom which are reproduced in The Raven 36 taken from Freedom of 16th August and 6th September 1997. Crute quotes Rooom: “all contributors to The Raven numbers 25 and 27 were atheists” not the religious. In fact Crute indicates he neither asked those with religious views to submit articles nor would he have published them if they had done so. As an atheist I am appalled by this intolerance. Furthermore, it denies the express spirituality of the anarchist position.

If someone asked me why I am an anarchist I would have to say it is a matter of spirituality, that is how I understand my place in the universe. And this understanding leads to my sense of message to give the glad tidings to my fellows. I read the works of past writers on anarchism and these lead to a sense of creativity and depth in my thinking. Just as artists and composers express their sense of art as a means of comprehension of the world around them.

Like Monet painting the same object over and over again from different angles, in different seasons, in different light, or a composer like Vaughan Williams, with others, collecting our national folk songs not merely to reproduce in orchestral form – which he did – but to go on to produce major works which express the spirituality of his being.

I mention Vaughan Williams particularly because, as Wilfred Mellers expresses in his book Vaughan Williams and the Vision of Albion his understanding of the depth of RVW spirituality, this despite the fact RVW “was a Christian agnostic, a disillusioned heist; by birth a countryman from rural Gloucestershire, but by nature a Londoner, a man of the city; by temperament an uncommon common man ...” (Stephen Town in Journal of the RVW Society, No. 10, October 1997).

Like all of us anarchists, complex collections of origins, experiences, thoughts and actions. But it is a good description of what anarchists are or may strive to become – we are not an elite, merely uncommon persons.

I gain enjoyment from looking at art, by listening to music. Both aid my processes of thinking and help develop my sense of creativity and, in my quieter moments, my sense of spirituality – in some senses my religion, for that is how I see my anarchism, as a secular religion, and as a humanist too I have long got over the need to justify my religiosity in arguments over atheism versus deism or, as a sociologist, a need to justify my moral philosophy in terms of class and status as apparently so many so-called class struggle anarchists need to.

It is simply a question of is something right or wrong? Is such and such conduct honourable? I am a free individual. I make my own religion as I go along. To revise Martin Luther: Here I stand. I can do no other. I am an anarchist.

Peter Neville
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Harold Barclay
Culture and Anarchism

Culture, in anthropological usage, refers to that which is modified, refined, cultivated or domesticated in accordance with human notions. It makes no distinction between what is presumed to be refined and what is presumed to be crude – rock and roll and Mutt and Jeff are as cultural as Beethoven and Shakespeare – but is the unifying concept of anthropology, the concept in terms of which different societies are described.

In some cultures, people are aware of few alternatives, but those alternatives are open to all. In others there is a wide range of choices, but the range is not available to everybody. The question, which type of culture gives more freedom to its inhabitants, causes thought about what we mean by freedom. This book provokes thought throughout, citing actual examples from the author's encyclopaedic knowledge of different cultures.

Not just native cultures. The book also studies the cultures of anarchic communities which are deliberately created within 'modern' society, and discusses how closely the ideas of Josiah Warren, who initiated such communities, and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, correspond to anarchism in the complete sense.

Harold Barclay obtained his PhD at Cornell University in 1961, and lectured in Anthropology at the University of Alberta from 1966 until 1988. Prior to that he taught at the American University of Cairo and the University of Oregon. He is the author of People Without Government, an anthropology of anarchy, as well as books on the Arab Sudan, the Middle East and, through his interest in agriculture, the role of the horse in human culture.

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