



ALLiance
a journal of theory and strategy

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A Note From Z's

Independent publishing has a long and storied history within radical communities. In the United States it played a significant role in the revolution. Tom Paine's *Common Sense* is still widely read. Lysander Spooner, the Nineteenth-Century lawyer, abolitionist, entrepreneur, legal theorist and political radical, self published numerous pamphlets promoting a whole slew of topics. Further examples of libertarian/anarchist publishing can be found at the [Corvus Distribution](#) website.

There are numerous radical distributions operating throughout the world. Many provide free downloads or low cost hard copies. The first issue of ALLiance was completely free. Copies were mailed to everyone that asked. Many people sent in donations. I really appreciated that as it helped offset some of the costs. ALLiance will continue to be distributed in this manner. If you enjoy what you see, considering helping out either by distributing copies in your area or making a donation.

The pdf of ALLiance can be found at <http://issuu.com/ALLianceJournal> or <http://www.scribd.com/Christopher%20Lentil>. I can be contacted at chris (at) chrislempa.info or by snail mail at Chris Lempa / PO Box 442353 / Lawrence, KS 66044.

I am always looking for new material to publish. Submissions may be sent to the above address. Anything and everything will be reviewed and considered for publication.

Thanks for your support.
Chris Lempa
chris (at) chrislempa.info
PO Box 442353
Lawrence, KS 66044



The Strategy of Propaganda

By Darian Worden

If left-libertarians are to influence people, our ideas must be sufficiently known. A strategy of propaganda that is defined by the general goals of the libertarian left is essential to success. It is necessary to distinguish between general communication and propaganda. The former is organic and ideally involves an exchange of ideas and knowledge between people, while the latter is strategically planned and involves one party sending messages to another. While this essay begins with examples of general communication to help distinguish between it and propaganda, the essay focuses on propaganda while recognizing that both have their place in advocating liberty.

For conversation (not debate or speech-making), throw out the passive-aggressive mind control, the Michael Cloud, and the guru of suggestion approaches to talking with people. Say what you feel like, just as anyone worth talking to would do.

I would expect that few discussions result in immediate "conversions" to libertarianism, as there are many rationalizations for authority that need to be overcome by each individual before arguments for liberty can be sufficiently persuasive. This is emphatically not an insult to non-libertarians - they are simply trying to hold onto their principles.

Treating a unique individual as if she was simply a personality type to be decoded before a mechanized process of conversion can begin is certainly less respectful to her humanity than the realization that minds do not function on pure logic.

The best approach for discussions is to be respectful, but natural. A conversation should be two or more people learning from each other, not propaganda, and not a mind game.

Similarly there is no reason to act like it's okay when your principles are intentionally insulted. Someone far enough from the libertarian left to post "you just don't want a draft because you're a bunch of lazy pussies" on a message board is unlikely to be swayed by one session of crafty reasoning, but others who witness your response might be

impressed by the intelligent assertion of your principles and gain a new found respect for anarchism, voluntaryism, feminism, or whatever else you emphasize.

Now that we've hopefully drawn a distinction between general communication and propaganda, let's begin strategizing.

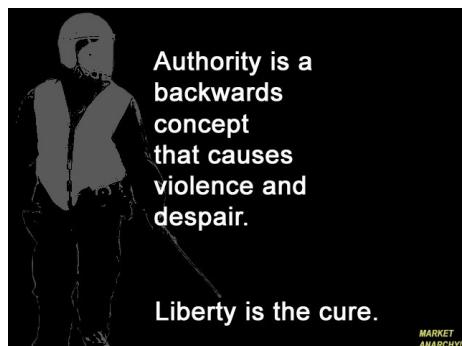
Our propaganda goals should fit our strategic goals.

- 1) Exposure: How many people know much about left-libertarianism? Anarchism in general? Agorism? And so on.
- 2) Differentiation: What is related to us and what do we oppose? This could possibly be thought of as establishing a brief narrative of conflict and hero.
- 3) Plurality: We don't want an army of armband wearers marching in lockstep (at least I don't and I expect other ALLies don't either). We are an Alliance, not a united front.

As ideology defines strategy, we should keep in mind the following.

- 1) We want to empower people, to liberate individuals. Therefore we ought to emphasize individualistic solutions and a plurality of ideas. A basic set of unifying principles should be proclaimed instead of rigid ideological uniformity.
- 2) Our revolution does not want to create a new authoritarian establishment. One consequence of this desire is that we must focus on building alliances and networks among individuals outside of the establishment and outside of traditional leaders.

A long-term goal of libertarian left propaganda is to hack away at rationalizations for oppression. It will be easier for people to reason themselves to freedom when the sacred cows that block the way have been pulverized by the relentless action of libertarian propagandists.



There should not be a one-size-fits-every-scenario set of rules for

propaganda. Instead, the overall goals of a libertarian left propaganda campaign must be kept in mind.

- 1) Misinformation must be countered. Assertions of authority need to be challenged.
- 2) Propaganda should grab attention. There are many creative ways to do this, and if fostering more creativity among the populace is a goal, then creativity should be emphasized.
- 3) Positive and negative must be shown. Liberty is good; oppression is bad. It is important to connect cause and effect by presenting something we uphold as the solution to something we oppose.
- 4) It is okay to have some detailed messages that consume much time and attention provided there are hooks. However, propaganda should usually be designed to be effective even if only a small part of the material is taken in at a time.
- 5) Propaganda ought to be thought provoking. It is not necessary to provide answers all of the time if people are asking the right questions.
- 6) The Alliance of the Libertarian Left is decentralized, so propaganda strategy ought to take decentralization into account. We currently have several bases to download materials from, and the tools to create and distribute propaganda are widespread in the information age. Each local sub-campaign has access to or can create a variety of materials that together facilitate the goals of libertarian left propaganda.
- 7) Most obvious, but essential to remember, is that the tone and content of propaganda must promote the values of the libertarian left. Materials should be both ideologically sound and free of anything that could be understandably mistaken for authoritarian messages.

Likely audiences should be taken into account. Generalizations can be made but their limits should always be remembered. For example, it might be useful to emphasize theory to students to supplement or subvert lessons from classes, give workers messages focusing on economic empowerment, and show already disaffected people ways of undermining the status quo. This is obviously not a comprehensive study, but perhaps an area where research could be done.

Psychological needs for independence and rebellion can be well provided for by such an anti-establishment ideology as left-libertarianism. The need for fellowship can be satisfied by solidarity (not lockstep unity) and cooperation within the freed market (not dealing unfairly through authoritarian privilege). The desire for empowerment is provided for by the very nature of left-libertarianism and its attitude of "Revolution begins with YOU."

It should be asked whether it is best to emphasize expected commonalities or expected differences with the audience. The answer depends on the scenario and the purpose of the materials used. The goal is ultimately to have others overcome their differences with us. Sometimes it might be better to explain why we differ on an issue and sometimes it might be best to build a commonality before examining different approaches to common problems.

Propaganda should also take the times into account. Though it may be overly optimistic to believe that we are in the end days of the modern state, the best tone and focus of propaganda today is perhaps different than what it would have been in the heady days of American empire, when supposed victory in Iraq followed supposed victory in Afghanistan and the economy appeared strong.

Let's take a moment to think about what authoritarian movements offer people. Desires that people have are co-opted, influenced, and/or manufactured by those who want to be in charge. Leninism and Nazism promised followers a part in building a better future. This future was meant for those whom the leaders chose. To foster unity behind the leader, the act of joining the followers was presented to individuals as a method of empowerment and those who were not followers or who were designated as enemies were attacked. United States imperial expansion after September 11 worked in a similar manner. The overwhelming mass murder of people Americans identified with left many feeling vulnerable. The state promised security, and many individuals felt empowered by getting behind the state as they were now part of something that they thought did heroic deeds. Similarly, the Obama campaign profited from the sense of historical significance that

it inspired in voters. By supporting the political ambitions of one black man, the voter was told that he would himself be sitting with Rosa Parks, marching with Martin Luther King, and putting his own hands into building a new tolerant and enlightened nation.

The above paragraph should certainly not be read as examples of what to do. Authoritarian ends are served by authoritarian means. They are examples of what we must undermine. To create the most free world imaginable we must make sure we do not say "empowerment comes from us" but that "empowerment comes from yourself." To do otherwise only sets people up to fall for the tricks of leaders. Our goals require severing identity from statehood and authority, and putting peoples' desires back into their hands.

We have many tools at our disposal, which brings us to our final numeric list.

- 1) Printed literature and posters: The New Jersey Alliance of the Libertarian Left (nj.libertarianleft.org) has many downloads and links to other left-libertarian materials. The enterprising ALLy can create her own materials. Powerful graphics and publishing tools can be acquired on the white market or through counter-economic means, open source software can be downloaded, and with a little planning word processors and MS Paint can be used for simpler things. If you don't have access to a printer, your friends might. College students are often expected to waste paper, so you can help them fill their quota.
- 2) Videos: Youtube and other video sharing tools open a world of opportunity for anyone with video editing or animation skills. A video with enough hooks can go viral or be embedded where useful.
- 3) Social Networking: The obvious Myspace and Facebook present opportunities to share all kinds of information in graphic or textual form. In addition, there are social networking pages and forums that center around specific communities that may not have heard the libertarian left word yet. It might be beneficial to think of oneself as contributing to said networks, not taking them over.
- 4) Entertainment: First, understand that bias is not the same as

propaganda. Creative works are always written through the

- 5) biases of their authors and will likely reflect those biases.

Propaganda, however, can involve intentionally making a political message entertaining. Such efforts don't have to beat viewers in the face with ideology, but can include desirable themes in the background.

- 6) The Streets: Street theater, graffiti, event disruptions, flyers, banner drops, etc can put dissent right in the faces of everyone who cares to look. While establishment media is likely to ignore small actions, the way your action and message will be presented by them should always be taken into account and contingency plans put in place.
- 7) Show and Tell: Building alternative networks, structures, and services can be used to present the gathering revolution to people. Mutual aid and counter-economics are both suited to this idea.

Propaganda is often treated as a dirty word implying some kind of deception. This is primarily due to the skillful use of propaganda techniques by unsavory and unpopular characters. When the same techniques are used by unsavory but popular characters, it is usually called "information" or "truth." A successful Alliance of the Libertarian Left must use the strategy of propaganda in an honest and unashamed way if we are to combat the lies of the oppressors.

BRING
A GUN
TO
SCHOOL
DAY
A Novella

DARIAN WORDEN

Darian Worden is a writer and activist from New Jersey. See his works at darianworden.com.

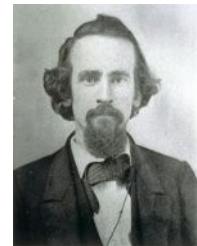


Geoist Anarchism

By Fred Foldvary

The name

The American economist and philosopher Henry George began a movement named after him, thus called Georgism or Georgist. Recently his followers have recognized that this name is unsatisfactory, because the basic ideas preceded George (for example, the Physicocrat economists in France, and the desire is not to follow a particular man but to seek truth and justice. Therefore, many adherents are now calling the doctrine "geoism," geo standing both for land (as in geography) and for George. I will follow this usage here, having had some part in propagating it since the early 1980s, when I coined the word "geo-libertarian" for an article by that name which appeared in "Land and Liberty" in 1981.



The economics

We begin with the classical division of the inputs of production, or "factors" as economists call them. The three classical factors are land, labor, and capital goods.

Land includes all natural resources, and excludes all that is a product of human action. Labor is any human exertion in the production of wealth (goods and services). Capital goods are goods which have been produced but not yet consumed. All improvements to a location are capital goods, including clearing, draining, and preparing a site for construction. The main type of land I will focus on here is real estate - the three-dimensional surface of the earth. What follows regarding land concerns spatial land rather than material land, wildlife, wind, or water.

Labor and capital goods tend to be mobile. They can move, and the supply can increase. Spatial land, in contrast, is immobile and fixed. It cannot be moved, imported, or expanded.

"Rent" as used here refers only to the return on land, or the yield of land net of normal expenses. This rent is determined by the supply and

demand in the market. The economic rent is not necessarily the same as the financial rent that a tenant may pay a landlord. For example, suppose a highest bidder for a leasehold would bid \$1000 per month, but at present, the current tenant is only paying \$600. The economic rent is \$1000, not the \$600. The economic rent is the same whether the land is rented to another person or is occupied by the title holder.

The economic rent can be estimated from recent sales and leases of real estate. In some cases, raw or undeveloped land is sold or leased, or the title to the land is separate from the title to the building, with a different owner. Otherwise, the rent is estimated as a residual: estimate the total property value from recent sales and leases, calculate the replacement value of the buildings and other improvements, subtract actual depreciation, and the remainder of the current property value is land value.

The price of land is related to the rent of land by the equation

$$p = r/i,$$

where p is price, r is the annual rent (assumed to be constant), and i is the real interest rate (subtracting out inflation). The price is thus the capitalized future rents. If there is a tax or assessment on the land value, then the rent also pays that charge, so

$$p = r/(i+t),$$

where t is the assessment rate based on p . For example, if the land value is \$100,000 and the assessment paid is \$2000, then t is .02 or two percent.

Given t , we can calculate the fraction f of the rent paid:

$$f = t/(i+t),$$
 so that if $i=.05$ and $t=.20$, 80% of the rent would be paid.

Alternatively, if f is known and we want to find t ,

$$t = fi/(1-f)$$

Land value or rent arises from two sources. One is the natural advantages of a site relative to other sites. The greater advantages create a higher rent in the better land. The second source of rent is the civic infrastructure serving a location, such as streets, transit, parks,

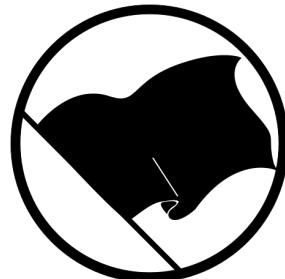
security, and utilities such as street lighting. These add to the demand for land, raising the rent and price.

The produced wealth is distributed as income to the owners of the factors of production. Landowners having title to its income get the rent. Labor gets wages. Capital goods get a rental or return. Each factor gets paid according to its contribution to output.

Anarchist geoism

In a libertarian or anarchist world, some people might be unaffiliated anarcho-capitalists, contracting with various firms for services. But if we look at societies and markets today, we see instead contractual communities. We see condominiums, homeowner associations, cooperatives, proprietary communities, and neighborhood associations. For temporary lodging, folks stay in hotels, and stores get lumped into shopping centers.

Historically, human beings have preferred to live and work in communities. Competition induces efficiency, and private communities tend to be financed from the rentals of sites and facilities, since this is the most efficient source of funding. Henry George recognized that site rents are the most efficient way to finance community goods because it is a fee paid for benefits, paying back that value added by those benefits. Private communities today such as hotels and condominiums use geoist financing. Unfortunately, governments do not.



Geoist communities would join together in leagues and associations to provide services that are more efficient on a large scale, such as defense, if needed. The voting and financing would be bottom up. The local communities would elect representatives, and provide finances, and would be able to secede when they felt association was no longer in their interest.

The secession option makes this system anarchist, since all governance becomes voluntary. The advantages of federating would keep most

communities within the greater association so long as the higher-level governance is efficient and just. The secession option helps keep them that way.

Statist geoism

Imposed governments, as all are today, mainly tax income and the sale of goods. These taxes get added to the costs of production, making labor and goods more expensive, while reducing net wages and profits. Such taxes reduce employment, production, and investment. They create a deadweight loss or excess burden on the economy beyond the taxes paid.

Henry George's main aim was reform within the system. Given that states exist and impose taxation, what would be the way to minimize the oppression and burden. There is a lower excess burden on the economy if the public revenue comes from land rent than if it falls on labor, capital, or goods. The land does not diminish when taxed, so there is no reduction in production. There are also no audits or complicated records to keep. The use of rent is based on benefit: landowners benefit from civic works, and they pay back the increased rents and land values generated by them. While libertarians would prefer that civic works be privatized, so long as they are run by government, the least intrusive way to finance them is from land rent.

Within the statist system, the geoist reform consists of abolishing all taxation except on land values or land rents. There would also be user fees where feasible, such as tuition payments for schooling, and pollution charges, which are in effect payments to use land as dumps.

The morality of rent

Geoism includes a moral philosophy regarding property. Human beings properly own their own bodies and lives. Henry George therefore stated that it is morally wrong to tax wages and the products of labor. He may have been the first to say that such taxation is theft. But self-ownership does not extend to land. Geoists recognize that markets function well when the owners control the use of property, and so geoism includes individual rights to possess land.

But it is not necessary for the title holder to keep the rent in order to put his land to best use. The rent is a surplus due to its better location, not to any effort by the title holder. Geoists also accept the Lockean view that human beings are morally equal. Therefore, the land rent due to nature ideally should belong to all humanity in equal shares. The land rent for all land that is used by people on the earth is rightfully owned pro-rata by all people on the earth at that time. This extends to previously unoccupied or new lands when they become used by people (example: mining on the moon) and the rent rises above zero.

However, only some of the rental of land is natural rent. Much of the rental is due to the civic infrastructure, and this rental is really a return on these capital goods and labor services. Ideally, that rental would be paid to the providers of the services according to a contract or agreement.

In a statist context, the collection of the site rentals by government is not as morally wrong as the taxation of labor and capital, for two reasons. One, by natural law, human beings are self-owners and properly own their full wages and products of labor. The taxation of wages and produced goods is therefore theft.

Second, if the government provides the civic works, it generates rentals, and if the title holder keeps the rentals and workers are taxed, this is a redistribution of income from workers to landowners. So, given that the government provides civic works, the least immoral way to get the revenue is from land rent.

The community collection of rent and rental thus internalizes two externalities: those due to civic infrastructure and services, and that due to natural advantages.

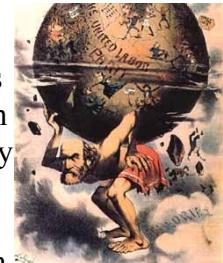
In the anarchist context, private communities and companies would provide the civic works and collect the payments by contract. Geoist communities would try to assess how much of the rental is natural rent, and distribute that equally to the population in those communities. Market anarchists outside the geoist leagues would probably be hostile

to this rent-sharing system and might refuse to trade with the geoists, but that would not be much of a problem for geoists, since the efficiency of geoism would attract much of the enterprise.

Geoist anarchism also provides a path towards a libertarian society. First move to statist Georgism, then transform neighborhoods into voluntary contractual communities. They would already be collecting rent for civic services, so all that is needed is to turn the neighborhood into a civic association.

Conclusion

Geoism is a theory of economic justice and efficiency. Justice is implemented by having each person keep his whole earnings and getting a share of the benefits from nature. Efficiency is obtained by not imposing arbitrary costs and restrictions on human action. The market tends to provide community services the geoist way, while governments tend to restrict and impose costs on human action. Geoism is therefore in accord with liberty, and is the philosophy best suited to a society free of state oppression and tyranny.



Geoism can be implemented in anarchism with contractual communities that collect the rent and use it for their collective services. Private communities can federate to provide public goods on a large scale when that is efficient. When there is no state-imposed taxation, private communities such as condominiums already implement geoist financing.

Geoist anarchism provides the structure that can preserve liberty while providing the benefits of governance and public services. It is a workable anarchy, while also being a minarchy not in limiting the services available from governance but by limiting the power of government beyond that which is voluntarily agreed to. Federated contractual communities can implement libertarianism by both preserving and protecting the equal sovereignty of each person.

Fred Foldvary's personal website is www.Foldvary.org.

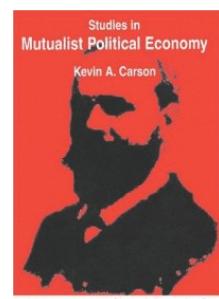
The Green Revolution Saved Lives? A Poison Meme That Just Won't Die

By Kevin Carson, Center for a Stateless Society

Recently, in honor of Norman Borlaug's 95th birthday, Ron Bailey of Reason Magazine posted a quote from his 2000 interview with Borlaug. For those unfamiliar with him, Borlaug was the most famous pioneer of the "Green Revolution" seeds of the 1960s, credited with a drastic expansion in food production. The claim that Borlaug saved a billion people from starvation is a persistent meme on the Internet.

In keeping with his rather in-your-face attitudes in favor of genetically-modified organisms and against anything organic, Bailey's excerpts from the interview consisted mostly of digs against organic farming. For example, Borlaug dismissed claims on behalf of organic farming as "ridiculous," adding that "this shouldn't even be a debate."

Now, just as an aside, whenever a spokesman for the establishment view on any subject fails to correctly and honestly state the issue of contention, he pretty much loses all credibility with me. Even if you don't have personal knowledge of the empirical data that would falsify the claims of one side or the other, if one side doesn't even frame the question correctly you can discount their opinion from the start. For example, when a registered dietitian repeats the little gem about vitamin doses above the RDA just creating "more expensive urine in your toilet," they're missing the whole point. First of all, the RDA is simply the minimum dose for preventing outright deficiency-related diseases, not the ideal dose to promote optimal functioning. Higher doses continue to provide benefits, on a diminishing return basis, in the case of Vitamin C up to a dose of several grams a day for most people. Second, that obnoxious little bumper sticker slogan ignores the whole idea of antioxidants: each molecule of (say) ascorbic acid in your urine has a free radical attached to it.



Along the same lines, it's interesting that, in making his arguments against organic farming, Borlaug displayed an almost total lack of awareness of what the available organic techniques actually are.

For example, he claimed it was impossible to get enough nitrogen from organic material. Existing nitrogen inputs organically, he said, “would require an additional 5 or 6 billion head of cattle to supply the manure.” This would require enormous sacrifices of wild land for forage. “There’s a lot of nonsense going on here.”

Indeed there is. Apparently Borlaug, a professor of agronomy, has never heard of green manuring with nitrogen-fixing cover crops. You don’t need additional land to grow the legumes—you grow them on the land you’re fertilizing. And they reproduce themselves—you just have to save the seed. Once you have fertile soil, you don’t need continuing inputs from off-site; intensive, closed-loop recycling of crop residues and human and animal waste will maintain fertility.

Borlaug also asserted that, if all agriculture were organic, “you would have to increase cropland area dramatically, spreading out into marginal areas and cutting down millions of acres of forests.”

He apparently conflates the distinction between large and small agriculture with the distinction between chemical and organic. He seems to assume that “organic farming” is simply the mechanized row-cropping that prevails in conventional agribusiness—but minus the synthetic fertilizers and pesticides.

But in fact, small-scale agriculture is almost universally more productive than large-scale agriculture. The prevailing techniques used in American-style agribusiness were not introduced primarily to economize on land or maximize output per acre. After all, in most parts of the country the largest agribusiness operations have had privileged access to large tracts of land, going back in many cases to land grants at the time of first European settlement. For example, in California many of the largest operations were built on expropriated haciendas dating from Mexican or Spanish colonial times. No, the prevailing techniques of American agribusiness have focuses on the substitution of capital for labor, in order to increase output per man-hour and reduce the agency problems of labor—even at the cost of reduced output per acre. And small-scale operations, accordingly, tend to have both lower outputs per

labor-hour and higher outputs per acre than large ones.

What's more, it's simply incontrovertible that the most intensive organic techniques produce far more per acre than conventional agribusiness. For example, John Jeavons' raised bed technique can feed one person on a minimum of 4000 sq. ft. That's one tenth of an acre. And it's done, by the way, without cattle manure or additional land for foraging them. Of course, it's a relatively spare diet—about 80% legumes, cereal grains and starchy tubers, and only 20% green vegetables and fruits—but that only demonstrates the theoretical limit. We're not, in fact, limited to anything near as low as a tenth acre of arable land per capita. And where there are genuine constraints on access to land, they're generally political: e.g., the more than half of arable land enclosed in Latin American haciendas and latifundia that are held out of development, while surrounding peasants hire themselves out as day laborers to the patron because they can't support themselves on their inadequate family plots.

Borlaug asserted that “if we had tried to produce the harvest of 1990 with the technology of 1960, we would have had to have increased the cultivated area by another 177 million hectares...”

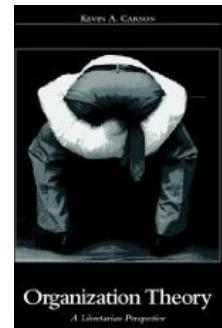
But that's dirty pool. That assumes that the only available choice is Borlaug's preferred method in use today, versus “the technology of 1960.” In such a cramped little intellectual schema, there was only one technologically determined path for advancement; the only choice was to take the one correct path or to remain static.

There is no such thing as neutral or generically “efficient” technology, and very few technological imperatives that remain constant independent of institutional and power considerations. The most “efficient” farming methods depend on who will be using them. At any given time, there are numerous alternative paths of technical advance. The main selective factor determining which one is adopted is the power needs of the dominant political and economic institutions.

The proper comparison, therefore, is with the path not taken.

“Green Revolution” seeds and technology, for example, were developed to be usable primarily under the conditions prevailing in large-scale cash crop production on land from which peasant subsistence farmers had been evicted: i.e., heavily subsidized irrigation water and other large-scale inputs like expensive chemical fertilizer.

Frances Moore Lappe eschews the term “high-yield varieties,” preferring to call them “high-response varieties,” because they only have high yields under the artificial conditions prevailing in politically privileged and subsidized, large-scale cash crop production. Under the conditions prevailing for peasant small-holders, without subsidized irrigation water or synthetic nitrogen inputs, relying primarily on careful soil stewardship and rainwater recycling, the most productive varieties are often the native and traditional varieties—drought-hardy, and otherwise adapted to local conditions over many generations.



The very claim that Borlaug “saved a billion lives” starts from a false assumption: that the main cause of Third World starvation was economic, rather than political. It assumes that starvation resulted mainly from insufficient production, from a lack of land, or from the inadequacy of farming techniques. In fact, the main cause of Third World starvation was what Franz Oppenheimer called “political appropriation of the land”: great landlords and landed oligarchs holding fertile land out of cultivation altogether, or tractoring off peasant smallholders so the land could be used to grow cash crops for export. The real source of starvation is the hundreds of millions of people living in shantytowns who might otherwise be supporting themselves on their own land, but who now can’t afford the “more efficient” crops produced on their former land at any price, because they don’t have any money.

To take just one example of the arbitrary assumptions concealed in Borlaug’s “now vs. 1960” contrast: Lappe has shown that the absolute calorie value of Third World food output during the period under

consideration was sufficient to provide a protein-balanced diet of 2000 or 3000 calories per capita. The problem was that so much of that output was used as livestock fodder to raise meat for export, rather than domestic consumption. The problem, in other words, is who owns the land and whose interests it's being used in. You can make your own comparison to the Irish potato famine, when the great landlords were actually producing wheat for export.

Another irritating thing Borlaug said in the interview, not excerpted in Bailey's birthday piece: "As far as plants are concerned, they can't tell whether that nitrate ion comes from artificial chemicals or from decomposed organic matter."

That's a bit like saying your body can't tell the difference between an ascorbic acid molecule in your food from one in a pill. The molecule itself may be identical, but it makes a huge difference to biological absorption whether it's part of a synergistic complex of bioflavonoids and other phytochemicals, many of which have yet to be isolated or available in pill form. Likewise, in agriculture, there's a big difference in bioabsorptive function when nitrogen is put into the soil through bacterial decomposition, as opposed to a handful of white pellets. And as regular commenter P.M. Lawrence helpfully pointed out, it's quite likely that nitrogen spikes from synthetic fertilizers have a different effect on plant growth compared to the slow release of nitrogen from organic decomposition—much like the harmful effects of insulin spikes from injection compared to the body's manufacturing it on-demand. Borlaug completely ignores the bacterial ecology of the soil and root systems (like the need for appropriate flora and fauna like nitrogen-fixing bacteria and mycorrhizae coexisting symbiotically with root hairs), along with the importance of soil friability and osmotic quality.

[Center for a Stateless Society](#) Research Associate Kevin Carson's written work includes [Studies in Mutualist Political Economy](#) and [Organization Theory: An Individualist Anarchist Perspective](#), both of which are freely available online. Carson has also written for a variety of internet-based journals and blogs including his own [Mutualist Blog](#).

The Creeping Hand of the State

By Michael Kleen

This article was originally published at Strike the Root, an online journal of liberty.

On March 7, 2009, during a city council meeting in Duncanville, Texas, Councilman Paul Ford stood up to protest the city's new red light cameras. He wanted to amend the city code to allow a jury trial for motorists who contested tickets issued by the cameras, and had previously clashed with the mayor, David Green, over the issue. Instead of allowing Ford to have his say, Mayor Green turned off the audio on the chamber's video recorder and ordered the police chief to remove the councilmember. Ford was dragged from the room and had to be treated for injuries sustained in the arrest.

Elsewhere in Texas, an anonymous tipster led a Solid Waste Services officer to the doors of the warehouse of the Rhizome Collective, a nonprofit organization in Austin. The warehouse had been built in 1952, but because the owners had made a few modifications to the structure, the city government demanded that the building be brought up to 2009 code specifications. Austin gave the owners one month to either sell the property, or hire contractors to assess the potential cost and apply for the permits to make repairs. Even if the permits were granted, the owners would have a mere 60 days to fix the violations or face a daunting series of fines. Members of the Rhizome Collective were forced to vacate the property after they were unable to meet the demands of the city. The collective had been a community leader in training citizens how to live sustainably and self-sufficiently in an urban environment.



Then there was the raid by Texas Child Protective Services against a community of Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints members in Eldorado, Texas in April of last year. Acting on an anonymous tip that later turned out to be a hoax, Texas police raided the compound, removed all 533 children, and placed them in state

custody whether or not they had anything to do with the allegations of abuse. While in their custody, the Texas CPS forced the children to submit to DNA tests, as well as physical and psychological examinations. A letter sent to the prosecutor by some of the children's mothers read, in part, "the physical examinations were horrifying to the children. The exposure to these conditions is traumatizing."

After all was said and done, the Texas Supreme Court ruled that the FLDS children had been taken without due cause and ordered them returned to their parents. One of the abducted women, who the Texas CPS claimed to be a minor, was actually 22 years old. Half of the alleged teen mothers turned out to be adults, and at least one had never been pregnant at all.

In August 2003, the city of Balch Springs, Texas , told a group of senior citizens they weren't allowed to pray before meals or sing gospel songs at the city-owned senior center. None of the activities had been sanctioned by city employees, and the prayer had been voluntary. The seniors sued, won, and the court decision compelled the Balch Springs City Council to "adopt a policy that will permit speakers to address center members without regard to the content or viewpoint of the address." Imagine, being forced to recognize the fundamental right of free speech!

For a state whose residents are so adamant about loving liberty, we can see that Texas is not immune from the creeping hand of government. The aforementioned incidences are frightening examples of state power run amok, and although they all happened in Texas , they could have come from any state in the US . Luckily, two of these four examples ended with a court upholding the rights of the victims (an increasingly rare occurrence), but imagine what this government would do without that basic check on its power?

The examples of Councilman Ford, the Rhizome Collective, the FLDS raid, and the seniors in Balch Springs illustrate exactly what would happen—and what naturally happens—when the actions of government officials are not restrained. If a small town mayor has no qualms about arresting and forcibly removing a political rival over a disagreement

about red light cameras, imagine what he would do if he had the power to abolish freedom of speech altogether? Can it be assumed that he would even hesitate if doing so was to his advantage?

Unfortunately, governments no longer need to directly abridge our basic liberties; they bind our ability to exercise them in bureaucratic red tape. In the case of the Rhizome Collective, the city of Austin went above and beyond subterfuge to shut down the collective. They simply made it virtually impossible for the warehouse owners to comply with their regulations.

The lesson learned from these four incidences is that anyone who is not dependent on the state, or who teaches independence to others, is a threat to the state's growing monopoly over our daily lives. Moreover, as we have seen with the raid on the FLDS, government officials will not hesitate to lie if it furthers their agenda. Anonymous calls are used to justify invading the privacy of citizens, and layers upon layers of regulations control dissent. Even city council members are subject to arrest if they speak out against something as simple as tickets issued by red light cameras without the option of a jury trial.

If unchecked, an activist state will impose itself on every area of our lives. While bureaucrats already, to some extent, tell us who we can marry and what we can do to our own property, now they want to tell us where we can pray and when we can protest. Like a thief in the night, once they gain entrance to your home, they help themselves to all inside. We must lock the door and throw away the key before it is too late.



Michael Kleen is the publisher of Black Oak Presents, a quarterly digital magazine of Middle American art and culture and proprietor of Black Oak Media. His columns have appeared in the Rock River Times, Daily Eastern News, Daily Egyptian, and on strike-the-root.com. He is also the author of One Voice, a pamphlet of columns regarding issues in contemporary America.

Give Us Back Life

By Flavio Goncalves

On March 13th I was one of the 200,000 workers marching on downtown Lisbon in protest. The average mood was of protest, but the music, chants and cold beer gave it a party vibe.

The more flashy these demonstrations of public discontent are, the sad truth is that it's becoming ever less possible – or even impossible – to change the current situation. The Portuguese versions of the Republicans and the Democrats in government are irrelevant. This government can and should be alarmed, but there is nothing it can really do. Our economical politics are thought and born in Brussels, Europe; which is not yet a country, but it already has a central government even though most of its national populations lives in denial. Sooner or later we will become the United States of Europe, no kidding.

One or two months before the insurrections in Greece, the banks were announcing that the tendency of the interests rates would be up, up and up again and that those unfortunate enough to have a bank loan should convince themselves they would pay them dearly. Meanwhile, the youth of Greece exploded in revolt. "Give us back life" was one of the common cries of many of the demonstrations and nightly revolts that ended with banks burning down – some of them Portuguese – and rioting the multinational chains of stores open for business in Greece. The mood was a revolutionary one even though no revolution actually occurred.

I'm not an economist. The average John Doe also does not understand the technical words of the economists, so I'm part of a comfortable absolute majority. But the fact is that, even though it was against all odds, the interest rates dropped and it is estimated that they will drop even further this year. The cause for this change seems to be the Greek youth that dared to stand up. This was the red sign that the usurer international bank had a glimpse of far away, in the country where, once upon a time, the Spartans also stood up against the world power of the time: the Persian empire.

The Persian empire had a huge army, but international finance has a much bigger card to play. The citizens of the Persian empire were not in debt towards the empire unlike all of us nowadays that are in debt towards international finance. The Persians had armies, the banks have time. All they have to do is to make things easier for us in the next 2 to 4 years. After that period of time, we will find all the rebellious Greek youth hostage of some education loan, house loan or car loan. In debt like all of us and scared of losing their jobs. Of not being able to pay the bills at the end of the month. All those long nights fighting authority, stoning the parliament and clashing with the police, the burning of the banks, that will all be a far off memory. The “give us back life” will be a mere footnote in a life where we live solely for the purpose of working, but no longer to create wealth. Today we live to work and we work to pay our loans and debts.

Not a bright or meaningful future, is it?



Flavio Goncalves lives in Portugal and writes for [Mathaba](#), an independent news agency and online news network. Visit him at <http://admiravelmundonovo-1984.blogspot.com>.

Government is Women's Enemy

By Sharon Presley & Lynn Kinsky

I ask no favors for my sex. I surrender not our claim to equality. All I ask of our brethren is that they will take their feet off our necks, and permit us to stand upright on the ground which God has designed us to occupy.

-Sarah Grimké, *Letters on the Equality of the Sexes and the Condition of Women*; Boston, 1838.

The above words of early feminist Sarah Grimké are as good an answer now as they were then to the question, "What do feminists want?" We want, as women, as persons, to be free.

Feminism is a proposition that insists that no one exists for anyone else; that government, commerce, technology, education, etc., all exist as tools for people to use as they decide, not the other way around. Feminism rejects any system that keeps people tied to roles that depends on a hierarchical oppressor-oppressed relationship in order to function.

Feminists want women to be free - free of the domination of men, free to control their bodies and psyches as they see fit, free to make their own decisions about their own lives independent of the coercive domination of others.

Unfortunately, inconsistency has crept into the modern women's movement. While rejecting patriarchal attitudes and dominating ways of interacting on a *personal* level, some parts of the women's movement will too often ask for government favors and handouts such as free child-care centers or free abortions. Yet turning to the government just changes the *sort* of oppression women face, not the *fact*. Instead of being overburdened as mothers or wives we become overburdened as taxpayers since child-care workers, doctors, etc., have to be paid by someone unless they are to be enslaved also! Turning to the government to solve our problems just replaces oppression by patriarchs we *know* - father, husband, boss - with oppression by patriarchs we don't know - the hordes of legislators and bureaucrats who are increasingly prying into every nook and cranny of our lives!



But there is a nonauthoritarian alternative - a philosophy that not only has goals compatible with the psychological goals of feminism, but methods more compatible with these goals than the alternatives usually touted. So it is particularly appropriate that the first woman in U.S. history to receive an electoral vote - Tonie Nathan* is an advocate of this philosophy: **Libertarianism**.

The essence of libertarianism is the belief that all social interactions

should be voluntary, that no one has the right to rule another, that individuals have the right to live their lives in any manner they see fit as long as they don't initiate force or fraud against others.

Libertarians want to repeal laws, not pass them. They are not interested in stopping people from smoking pot, having abortions, *or* from spending their own money as they see fit. Libertarians just want to leave people alone. They believe that there *are* voluntary nonauthoritarian alternatives to coercive government services and institutions that will work, even in our modern complex society.

Libertarian feminists believe that we can't achieve a non-authoritarian society by authoritarian methods. If our goals are personal autonomy and individual freedom, we can't achieve these goals by taking away individuals' rights to choose for themselves. If we pass laws that force *our* values on others, we are no better than men who have forced *their* values on us through legislation. We merely substitute our tyranny for the tyranny of men. Feminist Catherine MacKinnon advocating anti-pornography laws is no better than Republican Henry Hyde advocating anti-abortion laws.

Government is Women's Enemy

Oh! that we could learn the advantage of just practice and consistent principles! that we could understand, that every departure from principle, how speciously soever it may appear to administer to our selfish interests, invariably saps their very foundation! that we could learn that what is ruinous to some is injurious to all, and that whenever we establish our own pretensions upon the sacrificed rights of others, we do in fact impeach our own liberties and lower ourselves in the scale of being!

-Frances Wright, *Course of Popular Lectures*, New York, 1830.

Not only on a moral and psychological level, but on a practical level as well, it would be bitterly ironic for women to turn to government for solutions to their problems. Government has harmed women far more than it has helped them. Government has, in many cases, *created* the problems in the first place and still continues to perpetuate them

through unnecessary and harmful legislation.

Child Care Centers

The issue of child-care centers is a prime example of why government is an enemy, not a friend of women. Government regulations have *created* the child-care crisis! Zoning laws, unnecessary and pointless "health and safety" restrictions, required licensing that is difficult to obtain - all combine to assure that people will not be able to get together to provide low-cost child care on their own.

Then when the government sees the lack of child-care facilities (caused by government restrictions), it steps in to fill the void with stolen money at costs far in excess of what perfectly adequate private child care could be provided for. Typically a large portion of the cost of child-care centers goes to line the pockets of the bureaucratic administrators or to pay rent on unnecessarily expensive buildings - as scandals in New York City have shown so well. (Outrageously inflated rents far beyond the normal market value were paid for broken-down slum buildings owned by landlords with friends at City Hall.) But parents don't need these bureaucrats and expensive buildings to provide loving care for children.



Worse yet, after forcing parents and children into the role of charity cases, the government is also in a position to control the development of children just as it does in the public schools. Government officials intend that these "child development centers" (as they like to call child-care centers) will be places where young children can be psychologically conditioned to what the administrators think are healthier attitudes.

There is serious thinking among some of the future oriented child development research people that maybe we can't trust the family alone to prepare young children for this new kind of world which is

emerging... In the first 18 months of life, the brain is growing faster than it ever will again. It is then also more plastic and available to appropriate experience and corrective interventions.

-Reginald Lowrie, Joint Commission on the Mental Health of Children

Do you trust *government officials* to intervene in the lives and minds of your children?

Public Schools

If you wonder what kind of attitudes these government officials have in mind and what kind of "corrective interventions" they plan, just look at the public school system. Public schools not only foster the worst of traditionalist sexist values but inculcate docility and obedience to authority with sterile, stifling methods and compulsory programs and regulations. Government has obtained frightening power over the lives of children in public schools through the use of psychological testing and "counseling," secret (and often viciously subjective) files that follow children throughout their school years, and - worst of all compulsory drug programs for allegedly "hyperactive" children. All in the name of helping children, the government draws its net tighter and tighter. (That these programs are truly harmful rather than helpful is well documented in *The Myth of the Hyperactive Child, and Other Means of Child Control*, by Peter Schrag and Diane Divoky and in *Talking Back to Ritalin* by Peter Breggin, MD.)

These programs in the public schools are popular and widespread. It is unrealistic to assume that they won't be incorporated into government child-care centers, too. And never forget that no matter how much control you think you have over child-care centers or schools, the strings are always attached. What the government finances, it always ultimately controls.

Abortion and Contraception

The government's record on abortion and contraception is no better. Such controls could not have been instituted without the power of government in the first place. And alleged "reforms" notwithstanding, controls and restrictions still exist. The much-touted 1973 Supreme

Court decisions that supposedly brought "legalized abortion" still allow the government great latitude in dictating when and the conditions under which abortions may be performed; and the places where contraceptives may be sold are still limited. Whether you can even see female contraceptives or ads for them is also still heavily restricted by local, state, and federal laws. But unlike the Republican and Democratic politicians, who weasel their way past the issues, most libertarians call for total repeal of abortion and contraception laws, not just wishy-washy "reforms." Libertarians believe that abortion is a matter of individual conscience and choice, and that the State has no right to tell women how they may use their own bodies.

Other Government Discrimination Against Women

Much of the discrimination that women have faced in modern society has been enshrined and institutionalized through law and other government processes. So-called "protective" labor legislation has kept women out of certain jobs and encouraged private job discrimination. Marriage, divorce, and property laws all have discriminated against women.

In the area of sexuality, government discrimination against women is particularly blatant: laws against prostitution try to dictate how women will use their own bodies, and usually only the woman prostitute, not her male customer, is prosecuted. "Sexual delinquency" charges are brought against young girls far more often than against boys. Lesbians and single mothers are discriminated against in child-custody and adoption cases.

And most blatant of all, rape cases are treated differently from other assault cases: conviction is much harder to obtain because evidence is required that is not required for non-sexual assaults. Often not only must the victim produce a "corroborating witness," but she must also demonstrate *her* innocence as well as the rapist's guilt by proving that she physically resisted!



What is to be Done

The modern conviction, the fruit of a thousand years of experience, is, that things in which the individual is the person directly interested, never go right but as they are left to his own discretion; and that any regulation of them by authority, except to protect the rights of others, is sure to be mischievous.

-John Stuart Mill, *On the Subjection of Women*; London, 1869.

Many feminists will say "but what we need are better laws and better politicians." Libertarians agree that the laws must change.

Discrimination built into the laws, such as in the instances cited above, must go. Government is obligated to treat all citizens equally. Those laws that restrict the freedom of women to make choices about their bodies, about their lives and the lives of their dependent children, about their sexual relationships with others, must go. But while libertarian feminists uncompromisingly believe in the repeal of such restrictive laws against women, they do not believe that passing laws to obtain or extend special government privileges and handouts will solve the other problems of women. The history of government shows all too well that corruption, boondoggling, inefficiency, wastefulness, and authoritarian control are inherent in the political system. On both a moral and a practical level, women are far better off without government "solutions."

We need to develop nonauthoritarian alternatives, both as substitutes for government institutions and services already in existence, and as an example to others that voluntary action does work. For instance, an excellent example of feminist voluntary action right now is the rape crisis centers. Angered by the lack of interest or inability of the police and courts to deal sensitively with the problem of rape, women in many communities have formed rape crisis centers to provide help and support for rape victims and to try and dispel the many myths about the crime of rape. The various self-help medical clinics are another good example of a non-governmental solution to a problem, and schools, child-care centers, and other important services also exist on private, voluntary community bases already. Libertarians believe that many additional services can also be provided if the government will just get

off our backs. We are learning to break free of Big Brother politically as well as psychologically. We don't need him either way.

** Ms. Nathan ran for Vice President on the Libertarian Party ticket in 1972. She and her running-mate, John Hospers, received a maverick electoral vote from a Virginia Republican elector, Roger MacBride. Mr. MacBride was the 1976 Libertarian Party candidate for President.*

Recommended Reading

Emma Goldman. Living My Life.

Suzanne La Follette, Concerning Women

Hilda Scott. Does Socialism Liberate Women

Originally published by the Association of Libertarian Feminists. Online at www.alf.org. Copyright 1976, 2000 Sharon Presley and Lynn Kinsky

Culture Crash

By Chris Lempa

"Culture generally refers to patterns of human activity and the symbolic structures that give such activities significance and importance. Cultures can be "understood as systems of symbols and meanings that even their creators contest, that lack fixed boundaries, that are constantly in flux, and that interact and compete with one another."

Culture can be defined as all the ways of life including arts, beliefs and institutions of a population that are passed down from generation to generation. Culture has been called "the way of life for an entire society." As such, it includes codes of manners, dress, language, religion, rituals, norms of behavior such as law and morality, and systems of belief as well as the art."

-Wikipedia, the anarchistic online encyclopedia

My goal in this short space is not to define culture or debate its merits. Rather, I will use the broad quote provided in the epigraph as a launching pad to discuss where the dominant culture has led us (negative) and where we can take it (positive). A close associate often

reminds me that it is important to define my terms. With that in mind, I will provide the following definition for dominant culture

"Whereas traditional societies can be characterized by a high consistency of cultural traits and customs, modern societies are often a conglomeration of different, often competing, cultures and subcultures. In such a situation of diversity, a dominant culture is one that is able, through economic or political power, to impose its values, language, and ways of behaving on a subordinate culture or cultures. This may be achieved through legal or political suppression of other sets of values and patterns of behaviour, or by monopolizing the media of communication. (A Dictionary of Sociology 1998, originally published by Oxford University Press 1998.)"

There are many signs that the dominant culture is failing. A quick glance at the [Earth Policy Institute's Eco-Economy Indicators](#) warns that [world grain stocks are falling](#), the [world fish catch has hit its limits](#), and that the [world's water resources face mounting pressures](#). The website for the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) has a section dedicated to [failed banks](#). There have been 38 bank failures since October 1, 2000. The [Worldwatch Institute](#) has a great program called [Vital Signs Online](#), and their section on [Fossil Fuels](#) notes that,



"North America and Asia remain the world's leading oil users, at 25.3 million barrels and 21.4 million barrels a day in 2006, respectively. The United States drained 20.7 million barrels of oil daily—24 percent of the global total. Yet U.S. gasoline use dropped by about 1 percent from the previous year as consumers reacted to higher prices. Other top consumers include Europe at 16.1 million barrels daily, China at 7.2 million barrels a day, and the Middle East at 6.5 million barrels daily. (Fossil Fuel Use Up Again, May 6, 2008)"

All of the trends are disturbing, but what does this have to do with culture, not to mention a culture crash?

Each of the referenced indicators noted “patterns of human activity” and “symbolic structures” that are unsustainable. As the Water Resources Indicator notes, “rivers are running dry, lakes are disappearing, and water tables are dropping,” but unfortunately that doesn’t deter the University of Arizona’s [Turfgrass Research, Education, and Extension](#) (TREE) from finding better, more “efficient” ways to irrigate the desert. A webpage titled “Keeping Desert Golf Courses Green” notes that TREE is working on testing “heat-hardy grasses that thrive on salty water and only need irrigation every two weeks.”

Shifting to the governmental and financial realm, Doug French outlines the FDIC’s role in failed banks by reviewing Irvine H. Sprague’s [Bailout: An Insider’s Account of Bank Failures](#). Sprague was a Chairman and Director of the FDIC. While there he witnessed over 374 bank failures. Isn’t it interesting that the FDIC only lists 38 bank failures on their website? Why did they choose October 1, 2000 as a start date?

Vital Signs includes detailed reports outlining the results of various “patterns of human activity,” and instances where the dominant culture is driving us to the brink of extinction, or to a morbid wasteland are many. This may excite the Rapture crowd, but it should be scary to any rational, thinking being. Jesus isn’t going to make all of the believers disappear. If, however, He were, what is the point of turning the planet into a wasteland before He comes? Unfortunately, that’s what is happening

Obesity is on the rise. Suicide rates are high. More people are on anti-depressants or psychotropics. The pharmaceutical industrial complex is developing new drugs and then developing new diagnoses to go with them (research the connection between Ritalin and ADHD/ADD). Potable water sources are being depleted so people can golf in the desert. Food is being turned into gasoline.

In many different aspects of life - from bank failures to overfishing to

water depletion – the dominant culture is failing. The worldwide monetary system is in a state of flux while the US mortgage crisis has spread throughout the world. All the while our “leaders” are saying that we might be facing a recession. Unfortunately, the solutions are always the same: tax cuts, more technology, clean power, or make do without.

Einstein defined insanity as “doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.” If that’s the case, then it should be clear that the dominant culture is insane. But what can we do?

The good thing about living in the heart of the empire is that even small changes can have a large impact. The important thing is that we do something. The Back to the Land movement in the 1970s encouraged many people to live simpler lives. Many people are looking to recreate this movement. That’s a great start. Buy Local and Fair Trade Campaigns also have a huge impact. With that being said, I propose to take it further.

In an earlier article, I briefly outlined a vision for a more sustainable future. This vision was composed of a series of autonomous communities freely associating with each other. This is the pure definition of the free market. The interesting economist Murray Rothbard described the free market as "a summary term for an array of exchanges that take place in society. Each exchange is undertaken as a voluntary agreement between two people or between groups of people represented by agents. These two individuals (or agents) exchange two economic goods, either tangible commodities or nontangible services." ("Toward a Reconstruction of Utility and Welfare Economics," 1956)

Samuel Edward Konkin III (a.k.a. SEKIII) broke it down further. In the [New Libertarian Manifesto](#) SEKIII explains that, “the Market is the sum of all voluntary human action. If one acts non-coercively, one is part of the Market.”



A network of autonomous communities based on free association is the best chance for a sustainable future. I believe it is possible to make this a reality in our lifetime.

Chris Lempa is an editor for the website Strike the Root and publisher of ALLiance. His personal website is <http://chrislempa.wordpress.com>. This article originally appeared in Black Oak Presents (www.blackoakmedia.org). He can be reached at chris (at) chrislempa.info.

Resources

Strike the Root – www.strike-the-root.com

Alliance of the Libertarian Left – www.libertarianleft.org

Agorist Action Alliance – www.agorism.info/a3/start

Molinari Institute – www.praxeology.net/molinari.htm

Center for a Stateless Society – <http://c4ss.org>

Association of Libertarian Feminists – www.alf.org

Anarchist FAQ – www.infoshop.org/faq/index.html

Libertarian Left Aggregator – www.leftlibertarian.org

AnarchoBlogs Aggregator – www.anarchoblogs.org

Blogosphere of the Libertarian Left- www.libertarianleft.bravehost.com

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