

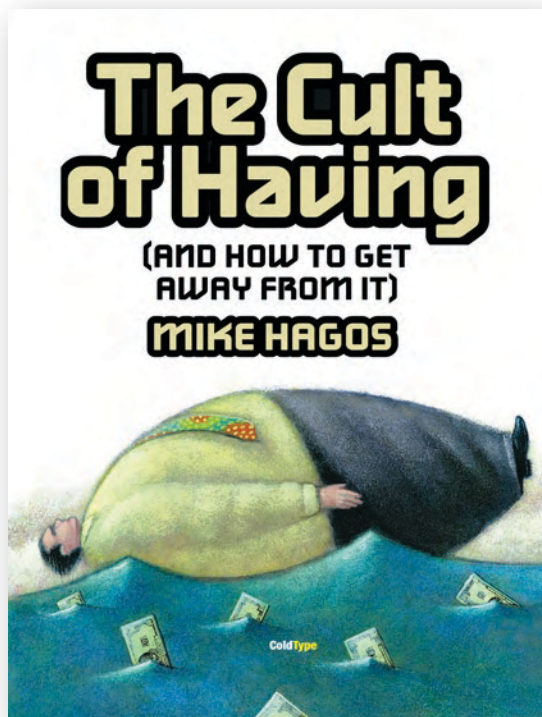
The Cult of Having

(AND HOW TO GET
AWAY FROM IT)

MIKE HAGOS



ColdType



THE AUTHOR

Mike Hagos, a Swedish national with a mixed cultural and ethnic background, is a social scientist with a major in Peace and Conflict Studies. He can be reached at mike_e_h@hotmail.com

© Mike Hagos, 2009

ColdType

WRITING WORTH READING FROM AROUND THE WORLD

www.coldtype.net

The Cult Of Having (And How To Get Away From It)

MICHAEL HAGOS

There is no more fundamental distinction between men, psychologically and morally, than the one between those who love death and those who love life, between the *necrophilous* and the *biophilous*. (Erich Fromm)

I have put before you life and death, blessing and curse. Choose life, that you and your children may live. (Deuteronomy 30: 19)

He who loves nothing destructible has no place in himself where he can be wounded by the man of power and he becomes inviolable, since he loves inviolable values as they ought to be loved. (Guigo the Carthusian)

What is generally regarded as success—acquisition of wealth, the capture of power or social prestige—[should be] consider[ed] the most dismal failures. (Emma Goldman)

The wealthy and the comfortable wonder as before at the grumblings of the needy and are measuring the eye of the needle, which the camels of old had some difficulty in squeezing through [Mark 10: 17], to see what chance there is for their passage. They are not so confident of the ‘good time’ hereafter as they are of the condition of their bank account now. I am on the other side—and would give the under fellow a show in this life. It is a shame to put him off to the next world. (Justice Stephen J. Field)

As the generations pass they grow worse. A time will come when they have grown so wicked that they will worship power; might will be right to them and reverence for the good will cease to be. At last, when no man is angry any more at wrongdoings or feels shame in the presence of the miserable, Zeus will destroy them too. And yet even then something might be done, if only the common people would rise and put down rulers that oppress people. (Greek myth on the Iron Age)

Adam Smith summed up the vile maxim of the elite class as follows (back in 1776): “All for ourselves, and nothing for other people, seems, in every age of the world, to have been the vile maxim of the masters of mankind.”¹ To be sure, there was only contempt for the “vile maxim” during the 19th century among industrial workers in the U.S. (including the lively and vibrant working class press), who bitterly condemned the advance of the Industrial Revolution and much of what it entailed, more concisely, the “‘New Spirit of the Age’: gain wealth, forgetting all but self.” Norman Ware, in *The Industrial Worker 1840-1860: The Reaction of American Industrial Society to the Advance of the Industrial Revolution* (published in 1924 and reprinted in 1990 by Ivan Dee, Chicago), describes, relying mostly on the labor press during the 19th century, how private power’s value system had to be hammered into the heads of ordinary folks, indoctrinating them to abandon normal human sentiments so that they could be replaced with the new spirit of the age. Workers then were concerned with what they called “degradation” and “the loss of dignity and independence, loss of self-respect, the decline of the worker as a person, the sharp decline in cultural level and cultural attainments as workers were subjected to wage slavery” (pp. xx, 20, 40-42, 81), which was regarded as not very different from chattel slavery, even insisting that “white slavery in the North [was] as evil as the black slavery of the South.” (p. 50) The workers, who ran their own independent press, said that “When the producer, whether master or journeyman, sold his product, he retained his person. But when he came to sell his labor, he sold himself” (p. xx), thereby “los[ing] the rights of freemen,” while “the rich are growing richer and the poor, poorer, and Mammon is usurping sovereignty in all places.” (p. xxi) “Here we see a moneyed aristocracy hanging over us like a mighty avalanche threatening annihilation to every man who dares to question their right to enslave and oppress the poor and unfortunate.” (p. xxii) “They who work in the mills ought to own them” (p. 79), not have “the status of machines ruled by private despots who are entrenching monarchic principles on democratic soil as they drive downwards freedom and rights, civilization, health, morals and intellectuality in the new commercial feudalism.” (pp. 78, 79, 81) All this would have been inconceivable under conditions of brotherly love, solidarity and subsequent equality of condition (not just opportunity), which is a democratic imperative.

The idea of “free contract” between the master and his starving subject is, of course, a sick joke. The reference here is not just to food, but to the need for freedom (both negative and positive freedoms; this distinction will be explained below), which is a fundamental human need and right. Case in point: “No long discussion is necessary to demonstrate that the power of denying a man his thought, his will, his personality, is a power of life and death, and that to make a man a slave is to assassinate him.” (Pierre-Joseph Proudhon)

The idea that wage labor is a form of oppression, in fact, not very different from actual slavery, is as “American as apple pie.” It was a standard theme in the independent working class press in the U.S. from the early days of the Industrial Revolution. It was even a slogan of the Republican Party at the time of the Civil War. It was taken for granted that to have to rent yourself to survive is not very different than to have to sell yourself. It goes way back to the Enlightenment and the origins of classical liberalism. One of the founders of the latter, Wilhelm von Humboldt, wrote that if a person creates something beautiful under compulsion, meaning wage labor, we may admire what he does, but we despise what he is, not a free, independent, creative human being but a tool in someone else’s possession (it has to be admitted that the idea of working for the sake of creative, independent work rather than for the sake of survival sounds exotic to say the least, but that is precisely what positive freedom entails. In point of fact, a central tenet of classical liberalism is that people would be willing to work not for extrinsic rewards like power, fame, profit, etc., but for intrinsic rewards, which constitute the *highest* forms of fulfillment and self-realization). Even Abraham Lincoln

acknowledged the underlying principle of a class society in which the labor of the many is made the wealth of the few:

It is the eternal struggle between these two principles – right and wrong – throughout the world. They are the two principles that have stood face to face from the beginning of time; and will ever continue to struggle. The one common right of humanity, and the other divine right of kings. It is the same principle in whatever shape it develops itself. It is the same spirit that says, ‘You toil and work and earn bread, and I’ll eat it.’

He also gave a prescient warning about the highly negative import of concentrated wealth:

I see in the near future a crisis approaching that unnerves me and causes me to tremble for the safety of my country. ... corporations have been enthroned and an era of corruption in high places will follow, and the money of the country will endeavor to prolong its reign by working upon the prejudices of the people until all wealth is aggregated in a few hands and the Republic is destroyed. I feel at this moment more anxiety for the safety of my country than ever before, even in the midst of war.

William Forbath, in “The Ambiguities of Free Labor,” brings to light labor struggles, aspirations, victories (however limited and short-lived) and defeats during the 18th and 19th centuries (but more in the latter period), in the U.S. He shows how “organized labor repudiated ‘liberty of contract’ as ‘wage slavery’ and forged an alternative vision of industrial cooperation,” as noted, a vision that was not only part of the mainstream culture of American society and of the independent working class press, but even of a republican constitution: “A main tenet of republican ideology from Tom Paine and Thomas Jefferson’s time to Lincoln’s was that freedom entailed ownership of productive property,”² a tenet that has been seriously undermined by industrial capitalism, particularly since the 1920s. “Faced with these changes the Northern elite and middle class gradually departed from the traditional republican definition of the workingman’s liberty in favor of a narrower, more strictly liberal definition: the worker’s freedom rested simply in his ownership of his capacity to labor.” This was described by workers at the time as “contradicting the worker’s status as a citizen, “ as “degrading,” as “a form of slavery,” and as “tyranny.” Naturally, “the corporation’s growing dominance was undermining individual freedom and ‘equal rights’ in ways fatal to republican government,” a dominance that brought about “the spectre (sic) of a permanent propertyless and ‘dependent’ proletariat.”

The problem with freedom in the context of labor is that it must not be allowed to preclude or undermine economic independence and ownership of productive property, “because such independence [is] essential to participating freely in the public realm,” in the words of Forbath: “The propertyless ‘servant’ or ‘hireling’ was an untrustworthy citizen,” since “His poverty and ‘dependence’ made him vulnerable to coercion, threatening the integrity of his opinions and his ballot.” Of course, the ballot presupposes a relationship of power and subordination even under the best of conditions, but this was the 19th century, an era that predated corporate capitalism, since the latter is a 20th century phenomenon. So let us give the workers of that time the due that they deserve, since in some very important respects they were more enlightened, cultured, engaged and alive to the problems of their days than we are.

Since every worker should have an unrestricted, inviolable right to enjoy the *full* value of the fruits of his own labor, under autonomous conditions of equality, without alienating and stifling, paternalistic guidance, instruction from owners, managers and coordinators (much less overbearing, predatory capital and outright orders from above), it is of the essence that workers are constantly inundated with the mantra: ‘Maximize your consumption!’, as if this will increase their well-being, when in fact it does the very opposite. It doesn’t take a genius to see through this charade, for how else can capitalists compel workers to come to accept the degrading and barbarous reality of wage labor unless they have internalized, willingly or reluctantly (it makes no difference in the end, since what counts is the eventual internalization, not the how) the capitalist story? It is want that compels workers to immorally sell their labor on the job market, wants created largely by the public relations industry, through advertising, which is a form of manipulation and deceit.

If we look at the history of modern capitalism, we will notice that “peasants had to be driven by force and violence into a wage-labor system they did not want; then major efforts were undertaken—conscious efforts—to create wants.” This capitalistic “need to manufacture wants in the general population” was a way of driving people “into a wage-labor society. In fact, what the whole history of capitalism shows is that people have to be *driven* into situations which are then claimed to be their nature.”³ Therefore, it does not follow from this that the “kindly” stimulus of poverty is preferable to the “degrading” coercion of the lash, since slavery is slavery no matter the pretexts and no matter how it is framed and rationalized.

The framework within which “freedom of contract” is propounded under corporate-capitalism to justify wage labor is by stressing the supply and demand nature of the “self-regulating” market. The worker is party to a contract, so the argument runs, one in which he voluntarily sells his labor in exchange for gainful employment through which he satisfies his needs, so where is the harm in that? The problem with this line of argument, as Forbath points out, is that human labor is treated as a “vendible commodity,” and the word voluntary is used dubiously to “describe the labor of an individual who owns nothing and is ‘absolutely dependent’ on his employer.” He may be free in the narrowest and most superficial sense of the term, but he is only one paycheck away from starvation, which is unavoidable as long as one dollar equals one vote in the marketplace, thereby making the latter profoundly undemocratic.

The abstract and illusory nature of “freedom of contract” or “free labor” under capitalist relations of production (and for that matter even under authoritarian socialist relations of production⁴) should be understood in the following terms (in the words of Forbath, pp. 810-11):

‘The anti-slavery *idea* ... was that every man has the right to come and go at will. The labor movement asks how much this abstract right is actually worth without the power to exercise it.’ Saddled with poverty and dependence, the laborer ‘instinctively feels that something of slavery still remains, or that something of freedom is yet to come, and he is not much interested in the anti-slavery theory of liberty.’ (Emphasis in original)

The ‘anti-slavery theory of liberty’ was, of course, the classic liberal definition of freedom—absent the legal bonds of slavery or serfdom a man was free. What the Northern laborer instinctively saw ... was the abstract quality of this freedom. And the worker’s liberty would remain abstract, or only partially realized, until the abolition of the wage system and the creation of a Co-operative Commonwealth.’

Within the wage labor system ... the laborer was an ‘itinerant chattel.’ The ‘laws do not compel anyone to work a longer time than may be acceptable to him; but when a man is without means to subsist upon, his wants compel him to work, and he must ask for

employment as a favor from someone who has the property required to carry on productive work. In plain language, *property is a tyrant, and the people are its slaves.*' (Emphasis in original)

In other words, 'freedom of contract' between employer and employee was illusory. As George E. McNeill, [an] Eight Hour League spokesman, argued to the Massachusetts Legislature's Labor Committee in 1874: 'The laborer's commodity perishes everyday beyond possibility of recovery. He must sell today's labor today, or never.' The terms of such a sale were thus set by the employer. 'An empty stomach can make no contracts.' The workers 'do not *consent*, they submit but they do not agree.' (Emphasis in original)

[Hence] no actual 'freedom of contract' could exist between labor and capital.

Furthermore, where there is brotherly love and solidarity—hence genuine democracy—there is no division of labor either. The first paragraph of chapter 1, Book 1 of Adam Smith's work cited above reads: "The greatest improvement in the productive powers of labour, and the greater part of the skill, dexterity, and judgement (sic) with which it is anywhere directed, or applied, seem to have been the effects of the division of labour." Corporate libertarians and their minions routinely use this statement to justify the prevailing forms of division of labor, but this is a fraud. Smith, in fact, bitterly condemned the division of labor and its pervasively harmful effects, warning, much later in the same work, that it would make people as stupid and ignorant as it is possible to become:

In the progress of the division of labour, the employment of the far greater part of those who live by labour, that is, of the great body of the people, comes to be confined to a few very simple operations; frequently to one or two. But the understandings of the greater part of men are necessarily formed by their ordinary employments. The man whose whole life is spent in performing a few simple operations, of which the effects too are, perhaps, always the same, or very nearly the same, has no occasion to exert his understanding, or to exercise his invention in finding out expedients for removing difficulties which never occur. He naturally loses, therefore, the habit of such exertion, and generally becomes as stupid and ignorant as it is possible for a human creature to become. The torpor of his mind renders him, not only incapable of relishing or bearing a part in any rational conversation, but of conceiving any generous, noble, or tender sentiment, and consequently of forming any just judgment concerning many even of the ordinary duties of private life. . . . His dexterity at his own particular trade seems, in this manner, to be acquired at the expence (sic) of his intellectual, social, and martial values. But in every improved and civilized society this is the state into which the labouring poor, that is, the great body of the people, must necessarily fall, unless government takes some pains to prevent it.⁵

The cruel logic of meritocracy does, of course, suggest that those who are at the top of the hierarchy deserve to be there on the merits of their talents and efforts (or on the alleged merits of efficiency resulting from hierarchical rule⁶), while those at the bottom do not deserve better for lack of talents and efforts. But that is clearly a specious argument, since the system is weighted towards certain groups (who obviously constitute a minority) and weighted against other groups (who constitute the vast majority), meaning that we are not living in a meritocracy, not by a long shot. James Madison, one of the founders of American democracy, made that clear when he mandated that "The primary task of government is to protect the minority of the opulent

against the majority.” And how did the minority become opulent to begin with? In brief, though violence and robbery (both historically and contemporarily), which is not even a controversial claim.⁷

Even though political and economic masters know that only very few of the many who seek wealth will find it, still, it is of inestimable importance for them to instill that value nevertheless, so that by mindlessly and pathologically seeking wealth, forgetting all but self, we destroy our sense of community without which we cannot renew democracy and regain, or gain for the first time, our status as sovereign citizens, hence cannot thrive as a human race, cannot realize our fullest human potentialities. In other words, seeking wealth for self and one’s kin entails cutthroat competition among the have-nots, which cunningly keeps them diverted (from what is being done to them by the rich and powerful) and controlled, thereby allowing the few to continue fattening on the many, literally and proverbially, while selling the illusion of wealth and power to the many. This is why Eduardo Galeano said: “The majority must resign itself to the consumption of fantasy. Illusions of wealth are sold to the poor, illusions of freedom to the oppressed, dreams of victory to the defeated and of power to the weak.”⁸ This kind of alienation is dangerously inimical to democratic equality, encouraging as it does a widening gap between the haves and have-nots, inevitably, since wealth is narrowly concentrated, so that most people who seek wealth do so in vain. Case in point: as Lasswell observed, “capitalistic society is a great confidence game, for it feeds on fantastic hopes. Millions throb with the prospect of fabulous riches in an economic system which is *inherently* destined to disappoint most of them.”⁹

Put differently, democratic equality will never be achieved as long as we are alienated from human values, from nature, and from social and political reality. Nor can this problem be resolved as long as we choose the *having* mode over the *being* mode of existence. We live in a soulless culture that promotes and glorifies the former at the expense of the latter. The *early libertarian* Karl Marx delineated the difference between having and being as two fundamentally opposite principles thusly: the science of capitalistic economy is

a truly moral science, the most moral science of all. Self-denial, the denial of life and of all human needs, is its principal doctrine. The less you eat, drink, buy books, go to the theatre, go dancing, go drinking, think, love, theorize, sing, paint, fence, etc., the more you save and the greater will become that treasure which neither moths nor maggots can consume – your capital. The less you are, the less you give expression to your life, the more you have, the greater is your alienated life and the more you store up of your estranged life. Everything which the political economist takes from you in terms of life and humanity, he restores to you in the form of money and wealth, and everything which you are unable to do, your money can do for you: it can eat, drink, go dancing, go to the theatre, it can appropriate art, learning, historical curiosities, political power, it can travel, it is capable of doing all those thing for you; it can buy everything; it is genuine wealth, genuine ability. But for all that, it only likes to create itself, to buy itself, for after all everything else is its servant. And when I have the master I have the servant, and I have no need of his servant. So all passions and all activity are lost in greed. The worker is only permitted to have enough for him to live, and he is only permitted to live in order to have.¹⁰

Imposing capitalistic values on human beings is no small task, which is where propaganda comes into play, by (among other ways) openly and furtively promoting the having mode over the being mode. Which is, of course, highly conducive to increasing profits for the large transnationals (since we let them induce in us the

sickening desire to consume more, with devastating effects on the South particularly), but it is also highly corrosive in social and environmental terms.¹¹

In the West our minds are constantly bombarded with a commodity consciousness that repeats the mantra: 'seek wealth and buy more stuff in order to be more happy.' In other words, *existential having* is dangerously predicated on *characterological having* (see note 51 for an explanation of the italicised terms). These two modes are presented as hardly even having any noticeable distinction between them. But like much else, this is a social construction dripping with ideology. It serves the short-term interests of the rich and powerful very well while demoralizing the masses. It cannot be otherwise (so far as the latter claim goes) because maximizing consumption is *not* a core human value. If it were, the PR industry would not need to spend billions of dollars every year constantly urging us to shop until we drop (this expense is tax deductible, which means that the public is coerced to pay for the privilege of being brainwashed). Which leads us to a very optimistic conclusion about human nature: "The fact that corporations and governments feel compelled to spend billions of dollars every year manipulating the public is a perverse tribute to human nature and our own moral values."¹²

Since authentic love has been a rare phenomenon in the modern period particularly, it is no surprise that the quest for money is a defining cultural trait throughout much of the world, since it is not just a reflection of but an overcompensation for lack of authentic love:

Our seemingly insatiable quest for money and material consumption is in fact a quest to fill a void in our lives created by a lack of love. It is a consequence of dysfunctional societies in which money has displaced our sense of spiritual connection as the foundation of our cultural values and relationships. The result is a world of material scarcity, massive inequality, overtaxed environmental systems, and social disintegration. As long as we embrace money-making as our collective purpose and structure our institutions to give this goal precedence over all others, the void in our lives will grow and the human crisis will deepen.¹³

The solution, according to Korten (*ibid.*), is to "create societies that give a higher value to nurturing love than to making money." And by love, it must be understood that we are talking about *non-hegemonic* love, as opposed to sadomasochistic attachment, which is the prevailing form of love today, between parents and children, husbands and wives, teachers and students, etc. (in the second instance, the roles are not fixed but switch according to caprice).

Erich Fromm, in *The Art of Loving*, shows compellingly that "love is not a sentiment which can be easily indulged in by anyone, regardless of the level of maturity reached by him. ...all his attempts for love are bound to fail, unless he tries most actively to develop his total personality, so as to achieve a productive orientation; that satisfaction in individual love cannot be attained without the capacity to love one's neighbor, without true humility, courage, [non-religious] faith [in humanity] and discipline." And he correctly concludes that "In a culture in which these qualities are rare, the attainment of the capacity to love must remain a rare phenomenon."¹⁴

Fromm's postulation that love for one's flesh and blood is no achievement, since even animals are capable of loving and caring for their offspring, is a damning implicit indictment of the nuclear family, in my view, since the family is a miniature state¹⁵ in which submissive and hegemonic values are reproduced in the young pursuant to their preparation for societal life. The more the child is exposed to arbitrary authority during its upbringing, the more smoothly (*as opposed to naturally*) it will execute its function later in life by

submitting to state, church and corporate authority (all of which are coercive hence illegitimate), while also dominating those he can dominate insofar as his social position allows domination (to the detriment of psychosocial health in himself and others, of course). If he doesn't, then he always has the possibility of procreating, since children are always fair game, towards whom society (even Western society) shows nothing but the most callous indifference, even in cases involving extreme—physical, psychological, and sexual—abuse (indeed, loving parents are the exception rather than the rule, since toxic parenting is a very pervasive problem throughout the world, as many studies have shown). The point is simply this: *there is a strong connection between the having mode and the authoritarian structure*. Fromm elaborates this point thusly: “...in the having mode, and thus the authoritarian structure, sin is disobedience and is overcome by repentance → punishment → renewed submission. In the being mode, the non-authoritarian structure, sin is unresolved estrangement, and it is overcome by the full unfolding of reason and love, by at-onement.”¹⁶

The implication of this analysis is quite staggering in terms of international peace and conflict, which is a question of paramount importance in today's world particularly, because unless war is renounced once and for all by all states (virtually impossible as long as brutal hierarchies exist), but especially by the most powerful ones (since they have acquired the capacity to obliterate human society, as they sooner or later will), the chances of survival for the species are *extremely* slim. Case in point: “Peace as a state of lasting harmonious relations between nations is only possible when the having structure is replaced by the being structure. The idea that one can build peace while encouraging the striving for possession and profit is an illusion, and a dangerous one, because it deprives people of recognizing that they are confronted with a clear alternative: either a radical change of their character or the perpetuity of war.”¹⁷

George Orwell was astute in his observation pertaining to continuous war and its correlation with status quo preservation by keeping non-elite society on the verge of bankruptcy (in other words, “the war of classes underlies all wars among nations”—Emma Goldman):

It's not a matter of whether the war is not real or if it is. Victory is not possible. It is meant to be continuous. A hierarchical society is only possible on the basis of poverty and ignorance. This new version is the path, and no different path can ever have existed. In principle the war effort is always planned to keep society at the brink of starvation. The war is waged by the ruling group against its own subjects, and its object is not the victory over either Eurasia or East Asia, but to keep the structure of the society intact.

By any rational and honest standard, in a genuine democracy power and wealth are dispersed, not concentrated, inevitably leading to a decent standard of living (including free quality education at all levels, free or very affordable quality health care and housing) for every citizen, able-bodied as well as disabled. The need for a demilitarized economy in a genuine democracy is also crucial, for, as Lasswell duly observed: “...the threats to individual freedom in an emerging state of chronic mobilization are recognized as imperiling some of the deepest traditions of the body politic.”¹⁸ He also recognized the question of how chronic mobilization would conduce to a failure in providing for a rising standard of living, which in turn would conduce to draconian police measures, naturally to the detriment of civil liberties (*ibid.*, p. 115):

The prevailing expectation among our leaders appears to be that ‘consumption as usual’ is necessary in order to sustain the necessary volume of incentives for the defense effort. Hence the hope is to avoid many drastic curtailments of consumption, and to divert resources into

defense measures by the “invisible” device of failing to provide for a rising standard of living... Resentments connected with deprivations in the consuming sphere may accumulate and discharge in ways that provoke police measures as means of combating lawlessness and noncompliance. Premiums are then put upon the search for the discomforts and the creeping immoralities of public and private life. Invasions of individual freedom may be pushed for administrative reasons, and tolerated for security reasons, with the result that liberty is crushed in the process.

It is, thus, not without good reason that Randolph Bourne said: “War is the health of the state.” (Even the highly respected Lasswell said something to the same effect: “...so long as the effective radius of the bombing plane increases, the size of political units will expand.”) In point of fact, the U.S. came out of WWII as a major industrial power. Not only that, but there is every reason to believe that WWII is what enabled the U.S. to come out of the Great Depression (since war is very good for big business), which in turn led to the creation of a “permanent war economy,” with an ever-increasing military budget, currently higher than during most of the Cold War. Stephen G. Brooks and William C. Wohlforth’s claim, in their “American Primacy in Perspective: From Strength to Strength,” that the U.S. currently commits only 3.5 percent of its GDP to defense spending, in contrast to 5 to 14 percent during the Cold War. These figures seem about right, but the authors nevertheless overlook an important fact: current military spending is higher than during most of the Cold War, though not enormously so, but is of course a much smaller percentage of GDP. However, the latter figure is meaningless. If the budget were for defense, it would not matter how large GDP is. Defense is relative to threats, not GDP. Since the budget is for offense, not defense primarily, it is relative to intended targets, not to GDP. Irrelevant again. The claim that the budget is for offense, not defense primarily, can be ascertained on the basis of the fact that every single enemy of the U.S. since at least the war’s end has been a chimerical fabrication, to keep the economy afloat for the ruling elites (amply demonstrated in William Blum’s *Killing Hope* and *Rogue State*) Even the 9-11 attacks were the legacy and debris of the Cold War. During the 1980s the U.S. recruited, armed, trained, and financed the most fanatical killers it could find to drive the Russians out of Afghanistan, after which the mujahedins were tossed by the wayside. The rationale for concocting enemies has to do with concealing the fact that the primary enemy has always been the domestic population, against which the ruling elite must wage a bitter class war, and for which purpose foreign enemies, real or imagined, provide the perfect pretext for diverting resources from the poor (who are rich on the aggregate level) to the rich and powerful, through the Pentagon system. The distinction between real and imagined enemies is not a very significant one, since even the real ones are a product of Western belligerence, as with jihad terrorism for example, which is a byproduct or outgrowth of U.S. violence in the Middle East. If we look at colonial policies and practices throughout the world, we see, in fact, that “...the whole history of terrorism has a pedigree in the policies of imperialists.” (Edward Said)

Since the reader might have some doubts about the offensive nature of advanced military-based state capitalism, a revealing official quote is in order. Thus, consistent with the norms of the democrata-torship:

The new [military preparedness] standard is to maintain military superiority over all potential rivals and to prepare now for future military rivalries even if they can not yet be identified and their eventual arrival is only speculative... Military requirements have become detached from net assessments of actual security threats. Generic wars and generic capabilities are proffered as the basis of planning. Particularities of real threat scenarios have become secondary to the generalized need to show raw U.S. power across the globe.¹⁹

Ominously, there are enough nuclear weapons in this world to wipe out the entire population of the globe many times over, within hours. It is indeed in defense of the having structure of existence that the U.S. has had a permanent war economy since WWII, and in fact has waged perpetual war (more accurately, carried out wars of aggression, genocide and terror) during the post-UN Charter period (claiming anywhere between 12-20 million violent deaths, all of them unprovoked—add at least 1 million to that for Iraqi deaths by the U.S.-led coalition post-2003, not to speak of *tens of millions* of premature, poverty-related deaths in the South and the East *every year* as a consequence of the West's orthodox neoliberal economic policies which are forcefully imposed on the world). It is in defense of the having mode that the U.S. is (in collaboration with Israel, Japan and parts of Western Europe) accelerating the militarization of outer space for admittedly offensive purposes under the thin cover of 9/11 (with extremely destructive—probably nuclear-powered—laser weapons that may well do us all in), to further widen the gap between the haves and have-nots. It is in defense of the having mode that the U.S. has instituted a first-strike nuclear option against any state (even and especially non-nuclear states) in the world (to my best knowledge, Obama has not done, and most likely doesn't intend to do, anything to rescind this option). Which, if put into effect, is virtually guaranteed to produce a domino effect that will almost certainly lead to extinction of the species.²⁰ The long and short of it is that existing property relations throughout the state capitalist parts of the world are preserved by force and fraud at tremendous social and environmental costs. But the irony is that “Force is the universal coin which is used to hide and to deny impotence.”²¹ (This holds true even for those who pimp for war, even in the form of cheerleading. The fashionable but utterly dishonorable practice of urging everyone to “pray for our troops,” *the aggressors*, is also a form of jingoist hysteria. Which is underpinned by, among other things, racism wrapped in “patriotism.” But it also has the nice effect of spuriously legitimating the bloodfest, of violently perpetuating neo-colonialism under the deceitful guise of “Holy Justice”: another testimony to “the sacralization of war” [i.e., the merger of militarism and the church], which is nothing new; it dates back to the Old Testament era and is still alive and well, readily and effectively applied by the major powers whenever they desperately seek to justify self-serving fraud. And, most revealingly, those who pimp for war do not, of course, offer even a passing thought much less a tiny fraction of a prayer for the tens of millions of innocent victims of Western aggression, terrorism, genocide and colonial wars, quite in accord with their limitless hypocrisy. Besides, what is it exactly that we are supposed to pray for? That “our troops” carry out slaughter a bit less inhumanely in Iraq and Afghanistan, perhaps? Or that God salves their guilty consciences, if any? Or that God blesses and protects the blood profit, i.e., the bloody proceeds from oil and gas? Or that God protects “our troops” from the sectarian violence that the U.S. invasion itself is *solely* responsible for having created in Iraq? Or that God continues to bless “our troops” so they can continue to “selflessly protect our liberties,” when in fact both wars are racist, colonial wars that are undermining whatever is left of our liberties in very significant ways? What all this goes to show—apart from Christians' utter lack of genuine faith by praying and urging others to do the same, since Jesus urges us not to pray [Mathew 6:24-34]—is that religion, which is a form of collective insanity, does more than its fair share in promoting the having mode and necrophilia.) In other words, power is a pathological, compulsive overcompensation for psychological weakness. In this sense, the lust for power is the expression of “the desperate attempt to gain secondary strength where genuine strength is lacking.”²² On the other hand, tenderness (which of course does not preclude assertiveness and firmness when situations warrant it) is the *strongest* possible affirmation of life, based on and reflecting one's own genuine inner strength and maturity, not to mention biophilia.

True peace within and between nations cannot be realized without equality of condition, solidarity, and loving acts (pretty much in that order). And these are impossible as long as *we are what we have*, which is a very precarious structure of existence. If our sense of identity is based on what we have, then it is always threatened, because what we have can be lost. “If I feel I am what I have, and I have nothing anymore, then I

am not” (Fromm, transcribed from an interview on Youtube), I cease to be sane, to be potent, to love, to enjoy life, to be enlightened, creative and free. The only way to free ourselves of the anxiety and danger of losing ourselves because something may be taken from us, is if we restructure our whole existence on the being mode, that is to say, on the expression of our inner faculties and potentialities in the world, in what we do, not necessarily in an outward sense, but in the sense of the contemplative life, rooted in humanistic ideals. Such an expression does, of course, necessitate outward activity, too, with the proviso that it serves humanistic ends through socially and morally desirable means (in other words, unalienated activity), always guarding against the very real danger that constructive means do not become destructive ends, as has been the case so far.

Benedictus de Spinoza made an insightful observation regarding irrational passions, such as pursuing wealth, power, fame, etc. He called such strivings a form of insanity: “But if the *greedy* person thinks only of money and possessions, the ambitious one only of fame, one does not think of them as being insane, but only as annoying; generally one has contempt for them. But *factually*, greediness, ambition, and so forth are forms of insanity, although one does not usually think of them as ‘illness’.”²³

Not only is the quest for money an overcompensation for lack of genuine love, but, in parallel, for Marx the “struggle between capital and labour (sic) ... was the fight between aliveness and deadness, the present versus the past, people versus things, being versus having. For Marx the question was: Who should rule whom – should life rule the dead, or the dead rule life?” Put differently, “*Being refers to life* and to the present; *having, to death* and to the past.”²⁴ This is not a hyperbolic or metaphorical statement, for, as noted, our artificial well-being in the West translates into ill-being and devastation for much of the Third World, including the Second.

Finding a real, long-term and once-and-for-all solution to global poverty should occupy the highest place on the agenda of progressive activists in the West, because the fire of imposed destitution on Africa and the rest of the Third and Second Worlds (including the Third World within the First) is now so complete that it is no longer possible to turn a blind eye to it, if we have any humanity and decency at all left in us. We do, after all, share responsibility for the monstrous crimes that our leaders have been perpetrating in our names for centuries.

To be sure, foreign aid could, at least in theory, help alleviate poverty in the South if it didn’t have any destructive conditionalities attached to it and was much higher than prevailing miserly levels. But in the real world of power and subordination, the answer to poverty in the South does not *necessarily* lie in foreign aid²⁵—which is so shamefully low as to be laughable, since it claimed only 0.22 percent of GNP of the OECD countries in 2002, far short of the meager 0.77 percent goal agreed to by the international community—since aid presupposes a legitimate claim to one’s holdings, but far-reaching changes in the dominant societies, from the bottom up, by democratizing the economic system and the international order, so that resources are distributed on equitable terms, crucially without overlooking the need for massive reparations to the Third World particularly (for all the absolutely horrifying and highly consequential crimes perpetrated against it since the time of European colonialism), including substantial if not complete debt cancellation, since most Third World indebtedness is illegitimate.²⁶

The problem with the flow of foreign aid from rich to pauperized countries is that much of it is publicly-subsidized export promotion, which results in socially harmful practices. For example, the so-called ‘debt crisis’ (which is an ideological construct rather than a simple economic fact, and from which much Western coercive power derives) forces pauperized countries to open up their markets to a flood of heavily subsidized Western agricultural products. Which are dumped at artificially low prices to undermine local production, thereby giving the West a monopoly on humanity’s staples. To make matters worse, the South is

not allowed to export finished products to rich countries; if it tries to, it is slapped with high tariffs, which it naturally cannot afford, in the light of artificial conversion to poverty. Instead, the South is forced to export primary materials: raw products, minerals, etc., which the West is only too happy to absorb (nay, cannot even do without!). These are then returned in the form of finished goods to the South, which is obliged to buy them back at grossly inflated prices (the reference here is to non-agricultural products).

So the only kind of development that is tolerated and even strongly supported and encouraged in the Third World is that of production for export (because this is a *resource-extractive sector*), which has a double, symbiotic purpose: 1) It is through such export platforms in the artificially poor South that primary products are expropriated by the artificially rich industrial economies under the sacred mantles of 'trade' and 'comparative advantage.' 2) Debt service forces pauperized countries to keep their economies oriented to production of exports, so that they can earn foreign exchange with which to service their debts, according to Justin Podur. As he duly observes, "Debt service takes an appalling share of income countries need to keep their people alive, and it also forces countries to keep their economies oriented to production of exports to earn foreign exchange. For every aid dollar received by Africa in 1993, three dollars left Africa in debt service; four-fifths of Uganda's export earnings go to debt service. Between 1990-1994, African countries spent \$13.4 billion in debt service—4 times what they spent on health. That Africa produces cash crops for export and imports food is not good for its own food security, but it is good for Western agribusiness, which gets a market in Africa at the expense of land reform and the alleviation of hunger there."²⁷

Multinational corporations' aggressive search for export platform countries (which is a central component of what's called 'IMF fundamentalism') has the predictable consequence of diverting pauperized countries' much-needed resources from food production for domestic consumption and internal development to exploitation by multinational corporations (with emphasis placed on the expansion of private enterprises, to which education and other social objectives are not immune), further immiserating the underlying populations in the South. Multinational corporations' uncompromising search for export platform countries is predicated on the assumption that the policy of liberal internationalism is a good thing, that it conduces to *general* prosperity for the U.S. and the rest of the world, when in fact it does the very opposite: it further accelerates the narrow concentration of wealth globally. The effect of liberal internationalism is that the South is not producing food for domestic use, which is replaced by agroexport, which in turn leads to increased GNP growth (the latter, of course, is a rich man's game, reflecting not socially desirable, dispersed and eco-sensitive growth but narrowly concentrated growth of wealth, at great social and environmental cost. So it should come as no surprise that when GNP goes up, so does child malnutrition, the death toll, misery and suffering). When the U.S. imposes by force a development model in which production for domestic use is replaced by ecologically unsustainable agroexport for foreign use, that is, in the interests of the large transnationals (even Western Europe *generally* has never had any objections to this), profits go up, but people predictably starve (since production for domestic needs is abandoned in favor of imports of heavily subsidized Western agricultural products). When land that was used for subsistence agriculture is turned over to ranchers linked to American agribusiness to produce beef, specialized vegetables, flowers or pet foods for the American and other Western markets, profits and GNP go up, a small sector of the local economy profits while most of the population plunges into disaster. That is why there have been hundreds of millions of people starving and malnourished in the South. That is the effect of the Western development model. So if the South refuses to "fulfill its major function as a source of raw materials and a market" (George Kennan's State Department Planning Staff), then such unreasonable behavior is described as "internal aggression" by agents of international communism and/or retail terrorism, thereby unleashing the wrath of Uncle Sam, in the form of wholesale (Western state) terrorism (i.e., if the country in question is worth the trouble by virtue of rich natural resources and key markets; if it is not, then indirect subversion and destabilization through the CIA and its underworld allies will do), which is deeply rooted in the corporate interest.

According to Charles Tilly, Western state terrorism (his choice of term is “coercion”) is closely linked to capitalistic property; it has had a lot to do with the accumulation of capital. And coercion works. If you want to conquer a people, whether your own or a foreign population, or both, the way to go about it is by coercive measures. Of course, since “problems of social control mount insofar as a state is limited in its capacity to coerce...” (Chomsky)—which is the result of centuries of bitter struggle by popular democratic forces, as opposed to a gift from above—the state-corporate nexus has to resort to propaganda to control the domestic population (since propaganda is to a formal democracy what violence is to a totalitarian state, even if there still has been a system of domestic terrorism against ethnic minorities and dissidents in the U.S., under the FBI’s COINTELPRO). But Western powers do resort to violence frequently and on a significant scale internationally, both directly and by proxy, in order to protect and advance private power interests. Small wonder, then, that the origin of war lies in theft, which is still true. In his major study of European state formation, Tilly accurately observed that over the last millennium, war-making became the dominant elite project of European states, for an unfortunate reason: “The central, tragic fact is simple: coercion works; those who apply substantial force to their fellows get compliance, and from that compliance draw the multiple advantages of money, goods, deference [and] access to pleasures denied to less powerful people.” Put more concisely: “war became [...] a means of satisfying the economic interests of the ruling coalition by gaining access to the resources of other states.”²⁸

Therefore, one has to ask: Is state power legitimate? Let’s use an analogy: Suppose X stands with his boot on Y’s neck and complains that Y (X’s *victim*) doesn’t recognize X’s legitimacy as a dominant force. In such a case, can Y’s *reluctant and fear-induced acknowledgment of X’s legitimacy as a dominant force really be taken seriously?* The implication is clear enough: If the state were really a legitimate structure, it would not need to concoct enemies in order to engender fear, nor would it need to make war and resort to force and fraud to perpetuate itself as an institution, nor would it need to resort to propaganda, or hide behind statute law. It would co-exist with other states harmoniously. It would not need an overt and covert police force, or a technologically advanced military apparatus, or a judiciary, or a prison system, or any other coercive and devious instruments through which the poor and the working class are cynically kept in subordination and oppression, while the rich and powerful enjoy *complete* impunity for all kinds of horrible crimes, from economic crimes²⁹ to crimes against peace and humanity to environmental degradation, etc., since there’s hardly a crime that’s not committed by the state-corporate nexus. The implication is that contempt for democracy is a traditional stance of those who have a share in power and privilege, thereby rendering the ‘social contract’ theory null and void. In other words, as long as Hobbes’ Leviathan or Hegel’s pseudo-organic state rules with an iron fist, Hobbes’ and Rousseau’s ‘social contract’ theory becomes inherently untenable. The basic flaw with Hobbes’ and Rousseau’s theory is as follows: the ‘social contract’ is a result of an unprincipled compromise/coerced agreement between rulers and ruled. The former are sovereign, the latter are not, according to statist doctrine, so that unless the subject people don’t slavishly submit themselves to the arbitrary, coercive and extractive authority of the state, they have no rights whatsoever. If they do submit themselves to it (i.e., reluctantly—it can’t be otherwise because the coercive capacity of the state invariably and by definition rules out free will and free agreement), then the result is, at best, nominal rights and limited freedoms, with the proviso that the governed can lose these rights and freedoms when “reasons of state” so dictate. So the agreement entered into between the powerful and the powerless can never really be free, because submission to hierarchical authority always entails *de facto* slavery, through loss of crucial life-affirming values, such as individual sovereignty, solidarity, equity, diversity, self-management and ecological balance, thereby literally endangering the survival of the species, for the sake of short-term elite interests. And given the lawlessness and violence of powerful states, weak ones do not stand a chance of exercising meaningful national sovereignty, even if the powerful ones only use the threat of force and/or coercive economic measures through the IMF, World Bank and WTO to undercut their sovereignty.

There are many mechanisms through which the deep-seated culture of terrorism that prevails in Western civilization is unleashed on Third World populations: direct military assaults, proxy wars, the arms trade,³⁰ trade sanctions, and economic strangulation (including IMF structural adjustment programs,³¹ which do nothing but disembowel national economies courtesy of corporate West), when Third World countries refuse to obey Western orders, by trying to strike an independent course (which is the mother of all evils according to American political theology). The logic is simple and straightforward: since military-based state-capitalism is a zero-sum game, since Europe (and its North American offshoots) has always been extremely hierarchical and unequal and brutal, since the wealth of the few is invariably bought on the backs of the poor majority, you have to wage war, in one form or another, against humanity, both domestically and internationally (that's what the Cold War was really about rather than a simple East-West conflict, which is why it is misleading to talk about the end of the Cold War, since the war against humanity will end either when the powerful have obliterated it, or when humanity obliterates authoritarian, hierarchical, coercive power structures, *excluding* its purveyors).

Not surprisingly, the Third World's subordination is being made complete by the increased pace of 'enclosure of the commons': privatization of public education, public health and other important public utilities, services and assets, thereby further immiserating the underlying populations in the South (as well as in the North, of course, though to a lesser extent), in accordance with the corporatocracy's predatory goal of commodifying almost every aspect of life and almost every sphere of activity, since everything is for sale under corporate capitalism—nothing is sacred save power and profit. The monstrous privatization schemes that are forcefully imposed on the Third World have bogged down its people in anti-development, as noted even by the SAPRIN study mentioned above, which acknowledges that "Poverty has been intensified and expanded by privatization." Malnutrition, undernourishment, hunger, chronic illiteracy, chronic unemployment and underemployment, in brief, the total lack of decent living conditions, have led to the near-total disintegration of Third World societies, especially African, Central and South American and, in some cases, Asian. The cardinal values that have for millennia represented and sustained Southern cultures have, with breathtaking audacity, been so systematically undermined that it is no longer just a matter of theft but of rape and sodomy, so much so that the Third World has now reached the last threshold of the human heartbeat. Despite all this, every effort is made to prevent the Third World from creating a payments deficit, by making it pay out much more than the true total of its budgets. These ultra-criminal policy arrangements owe their existence to a barbaric colonial mentality rooted in the rotten dynamics of *realpolitik*, in which the rule of force coupled with commercial values (the latter underpinned by successful marketing, which is the highest value under corporate capitalism) have reigned supreme while human values and concerns (including basic decency) have become so subversive as to make it necessary to demonize those who are alive to the problems around them, since they necessarily try to humanize (hence politicize) their surroundings. Is it any wonder that Africa—having been forced at gun point to lay the foundation for the Industrial Revolution, economic prosperity and the breathtaking wealth of the West through the trans-Atlantic slave trade and global holdings from colonialism and bounty from WWII—should now be in such a completely subordinate and utterly humiliating position as to make independent development impossible, guns still pointed? And pointed they are, thanks to the permanent armaments industry that perpetuates the business of death by propping up and/or keeping in power highly repressive regimes in the South, to quell social unrest and uprisings. This, despite the fact that the South cannot afford expensive weapon systems, since they divert money away from health and education projects, much to the delight of the architects of disorder and destruction in the West, who have a vested interest in keeping the South divided and conflict-ridden (Colum Lynch, *Boston Globe*, February 19, 1999).

Even as early as 1919, the extremely influential John Maynard Keynes recognized the need for permanent war in *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* (a work full of contradictions and ambiguities, but worth reading nevertheless). The opening words read:

The power to become habituated to his surroundings is a marked characteristic of mankind. Very few of us realise with conviction the intensely unusual, unstable, complicated, unreliable, temporary nature of the economic organisation by which Western Europe has lived for the last half century. We assume some of the most peculiar and temporary of our late advantages as natural, permanent, and to be depended on, and we lay our plans accordingly. On this sandy and false foundation we scheme for social improvement and dress our political platforms, pursue our animosities and particular ambitions, and feel ourselves with enough margin in hand to foster, not assuage, civil conflict in the European family. Moved by insane delusion and reckless self-regard, the German people overturned the foundations on which we all lived and built. *But the spokesmen of the French and British peoples have run the risk of completing the ruin which Germany began, by a peace which, if it is carried into effect, must impair yet further, when it might have restored, the delicate, complicated organisation, already shaken and broken by war, through which alone the European peoples can employ themselves and live... Where we spent millions before the war, we have now learnt that we can spend hundreds of millions and apparently not suffer for it* (emphasis added).

So, putting aside the fact that the end of WWII understandably brought an end only to war between “democracies,” after which the guns were redirected mostly towards the South, it is through war alone that the European peoples (which of course includes North Americans) can employ themselves and live! Can there be any doubt about the extent to which our economic system is rotten, hence about the need for fundamental social change, given the predatory nature of our economic system and the fact that our (elites’ larger-than-life and ordinary citizens’ marginal) egocentric welfare is based on the misery and profound suffering of Third World peoples, who have been bearing the brunt of our high tech barbarism and brutality since at least the end of WWII? I do not mean to suggest that the state capitalist system is fundamentally racist, even if our societies certainly are. Nor do I mean to suggest that power is not ecumenical in resort to violence. For example, the West does not regard Islam as an enemy, or conversely. So why is the West openly targeting powerless Muslims and Arabs around the world? Is it only because they do not contribute to profit-making, or are there other reasons they are being targeted even though they are not regarded as the West’s enemies, officially at least? The West does not regard the Catholic Church as an enemy, or conversely. But the U.S. was “openly targeting powerless Catholics” in Central America in the 1980s, to a far greater extent than it is targeting Muslims and Arabs today, practically destroying one country and devastating two others in the process. In Kosovo and Bosnia the West claimed to be protecting Muslims and attacking Orthodox Catholics. And so on. Power tends to be ecumenical in resort to violence.

It is because war is big business for the major powers (the arms trade, too, is a form of war, and even though it’s highly beneficial in conducting to favorable outcomes for the empire in terms of power and control, it is, again, not lucrative) that the merger of militarism and the church (the “sacralization of war”) is so effective in justifying, however perversely, a highly militarized economy that is, of course, highly dependent on military adventurisms in the Third World (the enemies are *always* weak and defenseless; nothing less will do for “home of the brave, land of the free”), in accordance with the strong commitment to

the Fifth Freedom: the freedom to rob, to dominate and to exploit. As is to be expected, the number of victims from Western military and, respectively, economic domination throughout the world is truly colossal.

To preempt any challenge to raw U.S. unilateral power, “the three grand imperatives of imperial geostrategy,” said Zbigniew Brzezinski, adviser to several presidents since the Carter Administration and one of the most influential gurus in Washington, “are to prevent collusion and maintain security dependence among the vassals, to keep tributaries pliant and protected, and to keep the barbarians from coming together.”³² In a similar vein, to keep the “barbarians” at bay, Pentagon planners are proceeding with the task of assuring U.S. control over every part of the globe. Major Ralph Peters, an officer responsible for conceptualizing future warfare in the office of the deputy chief of staff for intelligence, is lucid about why the U.S. needs to fight:

We have entered an age of constant conflict... We are entering a new American century, in which we will become still wealthier, culturally more lethal, and increasingly powerful. We will excite hatreds without precedent... There will be no peace. At any given moment for the rest of our lifetimes, there will be multiple conflicts in mutating forms around the globe. Violent conflict will dominate the headlines, but cultural and economic struggles will be steadier and ultimately more decisive. The de facto role of the U.S. armed forces will be to keep the world safe for our economy and open to our cultural assault. To those ends, we will do a fair amount of killing.³³

The long and short of it is that state capitalism, like state socialism, is an unjust and necrophilic order.³⁴ Those of us who support it are death-worshippers; those who denounce, resist and try to undermine it are worshippers of life. It's that simple. If we continue to let our necrophilous leaders inoculate us with the alienated and alienating bourgeois appetite for personal success, we wittingly or unwittingly allow them to manipulate and control us, since when we are busy pursuing selfish interests,³⁵ we are cleverly diverted from the extremely pressing task of renewing democracy (or instigating it for the first time) in the interests of historic continuity, of love, of sanity (hence of salvation). The good news, contrary to the super-Marxist claims of the business class in the West (the reference here is to the late authoritarian Marx, not the early libertarian one), is that an unjust reality *can* be transformed, which is a creative act rooted in libertarian conceptions, which in turn are based on and conducive to biophilia. “The life instinct thus constitutes the primary potentiality in man; the death instinct a second potentiality. The primary potentiality develops if certain conditions are present just as a seed grows only if proper conditions of moisture, temperature, etc. are given. If the proper conditions are not present, the necrophilous tendencies emerge and dominate the person,”³⁶ which leads to suffering (most of all, for the destroyer himself) despite the *illusion* of potency and happiness.

We can be fairly certain that those who feel a compulsion to prove to their surrounding that they are happy without anyone making an inquiry about the matter are actually quite unhappy. The problem is that “we are indoctrinated not to feel unhappy, because if you feel unhappy you are not a success,”³⁷ in the bourgeois hence alienated sense of the words happy and success (and most people find lack of success to be emotionally intolerable, because of the social stigma that is attached to it, due to the wrong kind of socialization). Fromm goes on (ibid.): “But you are permitted to feel neurotic. So you go to the doctor, and you say you suffer from insomnia or you ‘have a problem.’ You have a car, you have a wife, you have kids, you have a house – you have a problem. Our way of thinking and feeling is that all the emphasis is not on ‘to Be’ but on ‘to Have.’ We have much – but we are little. This attitude leads to defeatism, although it may be

unconscious.” But the bottom line in this context is that happiness is a very poor substitute for joy, for “A life spent in pursuit of pleasure is like sitting on a pin... every move you make leads to suffering.” (Buddhist saying) And those who claim to have joy despite lack of authentic love in their lives are not being honest with themselves let alone others, because love of money and love of life (hence a joyous existence) are mutually exclusive (but also because exclusive love is pathological³⁸). Chomsky has encapsulated the correlation between the New Spirit of the Age and suffering (both in those who mindlessly seek wealth and in their victims) as follows:

...the report of the study group on *Political Economy of American Foreign Policy*...identifies Western civilization with capitalist forms (as contrasted to the collectivist denial of freedom, initiative, and progress) and defines “the aim of economic activity in the West (as) the maximization of money income—in one or another of its forms—by individuals through the investment of capital or of labor on one’s own account or for, and under the direction of, others.” The document goes on, characteristically, to describe this particular perversion in terms of universal ideals. We cannot be merely an “impartial arbiter...maintaining world order,” but must be an active leader in the struggle to save Western civilization and the “universal ideals of human freedom, individual growth, and economic justice” which are expressed (“however imperfectly”) in the capitalist institutions of the West. Surely this concept of economic man is a psychological absurdity which leads to untold suffering for those who try to mold themselves to this pattern, as well as for their victims. “Look out for number one” is a prescription for demoralization, corruption, and ultimately general catastrophe, whatever value it may have had in the early stages of industrialization. Cooperation for the common good and concern for the rights and needs of others must replace the dismal search for maximization of personal power and consumption if the barbarism of capitalist society is to be overcome.³⁹

The most pressing need today is to recognize the oppressor ‘within’ the oppressed, so that the fear of freedom (which is a very potent fear) can be discarded in the service of life. Once the oppressor ‘within’ the oppressed is annihilated (thereby more easily leading to liberation from external constraints on freedom, e.g., freedom from state, corporate and ecclesiastical authority and coercion, from exploitation and from the irrational authority of a boss or foreman), then it will be time to fight for positive freedom, e.g., “freedom to spend one’s energy in a meaningful, productive way, by being an active, responsible, unalienated participant in the total work situation”⁴⁰; freedom to engage in creative labor as a means of life and for the sake of intrinsic rewards (which is the highest want in life), rather than for the sake of income, profit, fame or whatnot; and last but not least, freedom to create the cultural and institutional conditions that will foster the wonderful expansiveness of life on an egalitarian basis, which the love of money blocks, since money = faeces (for, among other reasons, those who have money look down their noses on those who don’t, which is a scandalous social crime, since the haves would not have unless they robbed the have-nots, who are rich on the aggregate level). Small wonder that much of the world (but especially the West), then, is drowning in a morass of dung, at least in terms of morals, since in a number of very important respects we are already far gone in the direction of necrophilia! Our cesspool morals are a result of our obsession with materialistic values, which do nothing but outrageously stifle the miracle of life.

In what respects are we already far gone in the direction of necrophilia? Specifically, in the form of worship of technique, chronic boredom, competitiveness, treating people as means rather than ends, our contempt for genuine ethical values (as evidenced by the miserable ways in which we generally treat

dissidents, thereby making higher intelligence and commitment to rationality and even minimal standards of honesty socially maladaptive, which is criminal), the affinity for cold pragmatism, blind submission to and awe of coercive authority, the induced desire for maximizing consumption and its attendant destruction of the environment (by polluting the air, the water, the soil, the animals, and ourselves), worshiping death through our voracious appetites for action, thriller and horror movies in which the main theme is grisly violence no matter how it is framed and rationalized, etc. But there are less obvious forms of non-sexual necrophilia as well, like apathy and silence, which are highly functional for power interests. Since the latter are pretty much by definition inherently necrophilous, stifling as they do spontaneous human action, creativity, independence, and cultural diversity and dynamism, it's easy to see how inaction becomes a severe threat to survival. But this is no reason to despair, since there's hardly a limit to what an awakened critical social consciousness can achieve, on the aggregate level. But the downside is that if the humanistic goals mentioned in this work (a central component of which must be centered around the being mode over the outrageous cult of having) aren't achieved soon, then mankind will in all likelihood have proven itself to be a lethal mutation, given the grave, terrifying threats facing it, most notably the threats of nuclear holocaust (those who might somehow survive the latter will, in the very best case, be thrown into a state of sheer barbarism, so much so that they will wish they are dead, even if they have a predominantly biophilic orientation) and cataclysmic climate change. The challenges are great, but so will the rewards be, if only we wake up from our dazzling stupor, take matters into our own hands, and shake our masters from their pinnacles, true to our democratic calling. Responding to this calling entails learning to love social justice more than personal gain. It's when we come to terms with and operationalize the fact that our greatest personal gain comes in the struggle for global egalitarian social justice that we will have achieved our humanity, a humanity that will, by definition, be dynamic and contagious yet non-complacent. The alternative is too stark, grave and dangerous to contemplate with equanimity. Those who are able to do the latter are, as Fromm demonstrates in *The Sane Society*, by definition insane, an insanity that is socially patterned, hence unnoticeable to those who suffer from alienation without being aware of it (since the pathological processes lose their individual character when they are socially patterned), the psychiatric establishment ironically being at the forefront. Fromm sheds insightful light on this issue in his essay called "On the Limitations and Dangers of Psychology" in the following manner: "modern man experiences himself as a thing, as an embodiment of energies to be invested profitably on the market. He experiences his fellow man as a thing to be used for profitable exchange. Contemporary psychology, psychiatry, and psychoanalysis are involved in this universal process of alienation. ... If psychoanalysis...remains enmeshed in the socially patterned defect of alienation, it may remedy this or that defect, but it will only become another tool for making man more automatized and more adjusted to an alienated society."

In sum, it certainly stands to reason that if we do not stop measuring wealth and well-being in material/monetary and other superficial terms (since cultural terms are the only sane standards by which to measure wealth and well-being), if we do not stop "prostituting ourselves," stop rendering unto Caesar what is not and never will be Caesar's, and change course soon (as there is still some time for constructive action before all hell breaks loose), if we fail to create libertarian structures centered around the *being* mode of existence (in accordance with anarcho-syndicalist goals and visions), then before long there won't be any history left to talk about (since the powerful *will* obliterate human society, sooner or later, if we let the status quo evolve along its present paths). It's that simple.

Choosing positive freedom over wage slavery; free, creative labor over dead, predatory capital; non-exclusive, non-hegemonic love over pathological love of money and sadomasochistic attachment; life over death—these are all moral imperatives, rooted both in our biological instinct for survival and in our human nature in a cultural sense (just because these are repressed doesn't mean that they don't exist). Those who have lost this basic biological and moral instinct due to decades of overwhelming toxic indoctrination and

propaganda need to be assisted in the art of de-programming and humanization, so that they may come to life and bring to life everyone in their orbit.

Apropos of activism, some people know, but many more should know, about the pyramid game and why it is a scam. For example, let's say that the person who initiates the game recruits 5 people, collects a certain sum from each, and tells them that if they, too, each recruit 5 people, collect their dues (after sending a good part of the loot up to the top of the pyramid, by whatever method that's employed), and urge them to do the same, not only will they recuperate their costs, but make huge profits. So a chain reaction is created, with the initiator being the biggest collector of money. By the time the people at the mid- or low-level of the pyramid realize that they've been duped, the initiator is a rich person, he or she quickly relocates to a country with no extradition agreements, and lives "happily" ever after. The reason this game is a scam is that it is based on a mathematical trick. The initiator recruits 5 people. The first 5 people each recruit 5 people. The latter do the same, and so on and so forth. If you do the math (i.e., $1 + 5 + 5^2 + 5^3 + 5^4 \dots$ 14 times), after the 14th cycle, you actually end up exceeding the entire world population!

Now, in light of the fact that the ideological system (the schools, the universities and the media) are generally not hospitable to dissidents, I wonder why anti-capitalist activists have not used this kind of calculation to mobilize support on a very large scale, and make it known to their readers/listeners that this theory could very well work to the advantage of the working class, in a relatively short time frame, considering the very large number of people who could be reached if each person committed himself to informing 5 people, and so on and so forth. In reality, there are surely at least a million people throughout the world who are already enlightened about the utter evils of the so-called capitalist system, which of course means that the task is made immeasurably easier by virtue of the fact that we are not dealing with merely 1 or 5 knowledgeable people to begin with. So, if each of the million (even much less) were to take anywhere between 6 to 24 months to inform up to 5 people, perhaps more,⁴¹ and the chain reaction is thereby set, within 20 years billions could be empowered with the kind of knowledge that would in turn motivate the largest scale revolution that this world has ever known (despite the language barriers that exist throughout the world, which can be overcome by virtue of the fact that each country in the world contains well over 5 knowledgeable persons), so that military-based state capitalism and the world system it dominates can be challenged and undermined, so that all forms of concentrated power, not least wage slavery, can be dismantled, in order to instigate and entrench substantive democracy at every level of life, which in turn would increase our chances of long-term survival very significantly.

Apropos of wage slavery, naturally, any serious challenge to it carries momentous implications for the prospects of freedom, "because slavery symbolize[s] the most extreme example of treating men [and women] as exploitable objects." (Forbath) Such an attack, if widespread, will undermine the prevailing forms of authority in the corporate dominated economy, since a free society is incompatible with dependent classes of workers who are degraded, alienated, intellectually and socially fragmented and demoralized. The way to change that is the same as the way to achieve any progress through history: ending chattel slavery, obtaining the vote, providing some degree of medical care, restricting aggressive violence, the Multilateral Agreement on Investments being stopped by popular organization around the OECD through the Internet, efforts to revoke the Union Oil Company of California (Unocal) charter (even if unsuccessful⁴²), etc. (meaning of course that there are reasons for cautious optimism despite everything). The only methods are education, organizing, and activism. In the West, as elsewhere, many people are engaged in these efforts, in global justice movements (ridiculously called "anti-globalization"), movements for democratising the economy by eliminating private tyrannies (corporations), etc. These movements are unprecedented in scale and commitment, even if the scale has to be much bigger for libertarian (i.e., stateless) socialism to be instigated globally, which is the only ideal that offers genuine hope for humankind, so that by studying and committing

ourselves to it, we can stop being apologists for the status quo, thereby coming to understand who we are and what we must do if we aspire to be moral agents, not servants of power. The alternative: contemporary barbarism, cannot be sustained for long.

“Dissatisfaction with our way of life is the first step toward changing it.” (And what greater dissatisfaction could there be in life than lack of love manifesting itself through the mindless quest for material wealth, which stems from greed and envy, not to speak of lack of positive and negative freedoms, thereby living as “happy slaves”?) “As to these changes, one thing is certain: They must take place in all spheres simultaneously—in the economic, the social, the political and the spiritual. Change in only one sphere will lead into blind alleys, as did the purely political French Revolution and the purely economic Russian Revolution. Man is a product of circumstances – but the circumstances are also his product. He has a unique capacity that differentiates him from all other living beings: the capacity to be aware of himself and of his circumstances, and hence to plan and to act according to his awareness.”⁴³

Those who are inflicted by despair or are otherwise immobilized due to one or another form of disgraceful rationalization ought to bear in mind that “There are occasions when it pays better to fight and be beaten than not to fight at all” (George Orwell), instead of blowing with the wind like virtually a hundred percent of intellectuals, who, besides being shamelessly sycophantic, voluntarily immolate humanity every day in the service of necrophilous power and blood profit, viz., in the service of the *having* mode, until finally there won’t be anything left to have, nor the possibility to *be*, if the current social order evolves along its current paths.

Since the hegemony of the ruling class under state capitalism (or any other elitist system for that matter) results from a constantly nurtured bond (by the elites themselves as well as by their lower level representatives) between the rulers and the ruled (Antonio Gramsci), one strategy than can be employed to break the ideological bond is to question by what *natural and moral* right political and economic masters rule. Consensual validation at the societal level—stemming mostly from dogmatic traditions, cultural myths and social illusions to begin with—certainly spuriously legitimates the status quo (as does the ballot box, which is not about whether or not people want to be ruled but who will rule over them, thereby making it largely a sham, since the ballot presupposes a relationship of power and subordination even under the best of conditions), but those at the top nevertheless bear a very heavy burden of justification, through rational and honest argumentation and proof. “Power always has to prove that it is legitimate, in any given context. If it cannot bear that burden, then it is illegitimate and should be dismantled. Rarely can such a challenge be sustained, when honestly posed and squarely faced.” (Chomsky; slightly paraphrased)

But there is a level of complexity here that we ought to be willing to tolerate, if we wish to alleviate human suffering (which is the highest task in life): it is of the essence that the public comes to understand the symbiotic relationship between—along with all the rotten intricacies of—state and private power, so that the public can use its latent power to weaken private power while strengthening those aspects of state power that have the potential to promote human welfare (*as a temporary measure*), until ideally both kinds of power are dissolved when the time is ripe, since, in the last analysis, both power structures are quite illegitimate. This strategy is called “expanding the floor of the cage” (an expression popularized by South American rural workers unions), which is a wise and sensible approach. The logic can be summed up as follows:

We know we’re in a cage. We know we’re trapped. We’re going to expand the floor, meaning we will extend to the limits what the cage will allow. And we intend to destroy the cage. But not by attacking the cage when we’re vulnerable, so they’ll murder us. That’s completely correct. You

have to protect the cage when it's under attack from even worse predators from outside, like private power. And you have to expand the floor of the cage, recognizing that it's a cage. These are all preliminaries to dismantling it. Unless people are willing to tolerate that level of complexity, they're going to be of no use to people who are suffering and who need help, or, for that matter, to themselves.⁴⁴

In the last analysis, the fate of the planet depends more on what the ruled do and do not do rather than on what the rulers do and do not do, since the latter can do nothing at all without the manufactured consent of the ruled. It therefore behooves us to come to terms with the fact that direct democracy is the only way to go if we want to be truly free, which we cannot be as long as we tolerate hierarchies, accept irrational authority and allow ourselves to be governed. Even the Trilateral Commission, a private organization of elites in the U.S., Western Europe and Japan, founded at David Rockefeller's initiative in 1973 and funded by his family's wealth, recognized in a very important study called *The Crisis of Democracy* (available online), that there is an "inherent contradiction involved in the very phrase 'governability of democracy.' For [...] governability and democracy are warring concepts. An excess of democracy means a deficit in governability; easy governability suggests faulty democracy." Such honesty is rare among those who have a share in power and privilege.⁴⁵

David Hume's observation that "It is on opinion only that government is founded"; and Gramsci's idea that there is a constantly nurtured bond between the rulers and the ruled; and Samuel Huntington's (he is Professor of the Science of Government at Harvard and a government adviser) observation that "Power remains strong when it remains in the dark, exposed to the sunlight it begins to evaporate"; and the libertarian principle that power always has to prove that it's legitimate, in any context—these truisms should constantly be kept in the foreground by those who wish to liberate their minds from orthodoxies, in order to become part of the global justice movement, if we are to make strides against state-supported private tyranny, which is not a law of nature any more than it is a law of physics. The "Fourth Reich"⁴⁶ can be challenged and undermined, even dismantled. What is needed is a substantial, broad-based democratic social struggle, encompassing primarily those who are disenfranchised by the prevailing system in all countries (while being open to the possibility that even those who are not but are of good faith may join in of their own accord), a fundamental change, international in scope, requiring a degree of solidarity hitherto unprecedented. Bottom line is that the economic system that replaces state capitalism must be subordinated to the real needs of man, both material and non-material.⁴⁷

This must happen in an egalitarian fashion, because inequality is not sanctioned by nature, as Jean-Jacques Rousseau demonstrated in his *Discourse on Inequality*, an eighteenth century investigation of freedom and servitude. In this work, he challenges virtually every social institution's legitimacy, including individual control of property and wealth. These are "usurpations ... established only on a precarious and abusive right. ...having been acquired only by force, force could take them away without (the rich) having grounds for complaint." Even property acquired by personal industry is not held "upon better titles." Against such a claim, he objected: "Do you not know that a multitude of your brethren die or suffer from need of what you have in excess, and that you needed express and unanimous consent of the human race to appropriate for yourself anything from common subsistence that exceeded your own?" It is indeed contrary to the law of nature that "a handful of men be gluttoned with superfluities while the starving multitude lacks necessities."

It is, therefore, totally unacceptable that over 1000 children die *every hour* from easily preventable diseases and malnutrition throughout the world, day in and day out (according to UNICEF, *State of the World's Children 1997*), while on the aggregate level the rich spend more money on their pets than they do

helping humanity. It is totally unacceptable that close to twice that many women die or suffer serious disability in pregnancy or childbirth, also easily preventable, since the needed remedies and care are simple (according to UNICEF, *Progress of Nations 1996*). If we can observe and contemplate such tragic but totally avoidable facts with equanimity, then not only are we weak and miserable creatures, but total, raving lunatics. It is our duty, if we are at all human, to explode with moral indignation at what we have allowed to happen while sleep walking through our unvigilant, mindless lives. It is high time to give up the ostrich-like legacy. We owe it to the *hundred of millions* of hapless victims whose premature deaths we have helped make possible/contributed to during the 20th century alone through direct and structural violence (along with the deep suffering of about half the world's population, at least), and to the who-knows-how-many victims of premature deaths and suffering that we are sure to help make possible/contribute to in the future, since things will get worse as long as most of us continue to wallow in our depraved mode of apathy, during which time our self-appointed leaders will wreak more havoc, true to their calling as bureaucratic gangsters, democratic thugs, sacred mass murderers, lawful robbers, princes of darkness and cave men in expensive suits, crucially with our witting or unwitting blessings and subsidies.

Those who object to equality usually do so mostly on economic grounds⁴⁸ (oblivious to the fact that equality of income is just one aspect of equality; there are many other aspects, but for our purpose it should suffice to reduce a long argument to its essentials by postulating that perhaps the most important aspect is this: “that no man should be used for an end independent of his welfare” – Frederick B. Artz), by arguing that it is right and just for a brain surgeon to make more money than, say, a cleaning person. But this is a specious argument, because a surgeon could certainly not perform a single surgery without a clean operating room, nor could the patient recover without a clean recovery room. Under status quo arrangements, those who receive the lowest remunerations are those who do the most productive work, and those who receive the highest remunerations are those who do the least productive work, almost invariably, as evidenced by the fact that a movie star makes more money *per* film than a low wage earner would make in *several* lifetimes, despite the fact that the entertainment industry is for the most part oppressive, since it keeps people diverted and controlled. It is, after all, not value free. It is very much part of the propaganda system, just like secular and religious education, news media, major spectator sports (which is training in irrational behavior, since it engenders chauvinistic attitudes in people while de-politicizing them), reality TV shows, sit-coms, etc. The manufacture of consent could not be accomplished so spectacularly without the film and music industries. Entertainment's great propagandistic utility as a mechanism of social control makes actors, singers, musicians, dancers, talk show hosts and painters utter failures in terms of healthy social function, unless they are in the *habit* of raising social and political awareness through their work, which is rare (if the value of a work of art is *purely* aesthetic—which it cannot *really* be as long as necrophilic class interests are built into it, as it usually is—it is not necessarily worthless, but it should be borne in mind that aesthetics makes no contribution to material well-being). Bob Marley, Miriam Makeba, Fela Kuti, Lucky Dube, Thomas Mapfumo, Pink Floyd, Rage Against the Machine, Linton Kwesi Johnson and Marvin Gaye are some notable exceptions among a few others, but even in such cases we are dealing with infotainment at worst and only partial politicization at best, since it is hardly possible to coherently raise matters of human significance through entertainment. In other words, entertainers help to mystify and perpetuate the undemocratic nature of the economic system in powerful ways, even and especially if they are doing so unwittingly. Case in point: as Edward Bernays (the father of spin who pioneered the “scientific” technique of shaping and manipulating public opinion, which he called the “engineering of consent” in his *Propaganda: the standard public relations manual in the West*, used by political and business elites, academics, religious leaders, etc.) put it: “The American motion picture is the greatest unconscious carrier of propaganda in the world today.” He could and should have included much of the music industry as well.

The fact that the entertainment industry (which is a huge corporate system, hence illegitimate) provides an effective means of gaining wealth, class power and social prestige while simultaneously distracting, subduing and de-politicizing the masses, is proof positive that authentic creativity is almost wholly suppressed and numbed in most so-called artists. There was a time when Hip Hop, for example, was kind of a politicized, militant social movement, but over time it, too, has sunk to the depths of degeneracy, by adopting, disseminating and instilling (or rather entrenching) degrading materialistic (and sexist) values. In other words, entertainers are, at least in effect, part of the state-corporate machinery that is waging a bitter class war against humanity (often adopting vulgar Marxist rhetoric and concepts), excepting a tiny minority that raises awareness through its work in rather limited ways. The main task is to dumb us down by masking social, political and economic reality, in order to keep us shackled. So *virtually* a hundred percent of entertainers are our enemies, based on the truism that if they are not part of the solution, then they are part of the problem. Besides, if they do what they do for benevolent reasons, then that should hurt their self-interest,⁴⁹ rather than abusing the pauperized through shows like MTV cribs, by rubbing in the fact that they have far more than they will ever need in an existential sense, which is *the* cause of our material poverty. In other words, “it is the structure of Western society and the rules of power in it that create poverty.” (Kevin Danaher). An aroused public can and should dethrone the moneyed aristocracy, along with the fake, glittery lives of all its venomous members, so that the economic system can be geared towards unconditional necessities for all rather than extremely abusive luxuries for the awesomely degenerate few.

In the event that the shackles of oppression are successfully broken one day on a significant scale, a far-sighted and compassionate approach should entail challenging and medically treating former oppressors (there should also be punishment of course, but it should be as mild as possible, since punishment does not deter crime, but primarily for humanistic reasons), so that they do not perpetuate the old patterns of oppression with other newfound victims, even on a small scale. This is an act of solidarity not only towards victims-to-be, but even towards the oppressors, so that the latter can recognize and reclaim the humanity that they have negated in themselves, which was/is done by negating the humanity of their past and/or present subjects/victims. For, as Paulo Freire duly opined, it is “Only power that springs from the weakness of the oppressed [that] will be sufficiently strong to free both” the oppressed and the oppressors. Only then can we reasonably hope that the vicious cycle of human destructiveness can be undone (not just killing and physically and psychologically harming people but depriving them of their rights and needs through distant institutional forces is also a form of destructiveness!); only then can the shameful inheritance of moral and social backwardness be disinherited, so that both the oppressors and the oppressed can emancipate themselves from this symbiotic existence in which each derives his self-esteem from oppressing or from being oppressed, since the fear of freedom is quite potent for many people, as a result of the wrong kind of upbringing and wrong education.

Since the authoritarian underpinnings of the having structure of existence are not very pervious to reason and love, how, one may ask, can one ‘win over’ to the libertarian side those whose money lust and thus soulless authoritarian characters are “deeply” entrenched? Since the problem is one of being uninformed and heavily propagandized, and ultimately about potent (hence peaceful) life versus impotent (hence violent) death and destruction, it would not be unreasonable to postulate that there is a very good chance of overcoming this problem, because “the propaganda that inundates [most people] is effective when unchallenged, [as] much of it goes only skin deep.” Such people “can be brought to raise questions and apply their decent instincts and basic intelligence,” thereby more or less “quickly escap[ing] the confines of the doctrinal system”⁵⁰ in the service of libertarian goals and visions.

If implemented, the ideas of the Enlightenment could produce free human beings whose values are not the prevailing ones (accumulation and domination⁵¹) but rather free association on equal terms and

sharing and cooperation, with efforts geared toward achieving common, democratically conceived goals. To keep the ideas of the Enlightenment alive amounts to nothing less than attempts to kill the culture of darkness and death that we are surrounded by, in the hope that the submerged culture of light and life will gain the upper hand. If and when it does, we must never let our guards down again, since the price of freedom is eternal vigilance. But for the here, now and foreseeable future, let us dare to care, which is the greatest lesson in life (Maya Angelou), so that historic continuity and universal welfare can be safeguarded, because the human family is already more united than it realizes (what is needed is to be acutely aware of this and to make this unity much more pronounced, with strong cooperation and coordination across the board, in the service of universal emancipation):

Suppose that you want a cup of coffee from the vending machine at work. First, there is the cup of coffee itself: that involves the workers on the coffee plantation, the ones on the sugar plantation and in the refineries, the ones in the paper mill, and so on. Then you have the workers who made the different parts of the vending machine and the ones who assembled it. Then the ones who extracted the iron ore and bauxite, smelted the steel, and work for the electric utility which supplies power to the machine. Then all the workers who transported the coffee, cups, and machine. Then the clerks, typists, and communication workers who coordinated the production and transportation. Finally, you have all the workers who produced all the other things necessary for the other ones to survive. That gives you a direct material relationship to several million people, in fact, to the immense majority of the world's population. They produce your life, and you help to produce theirs. In this light, all artificial group identities and special group interests fade into insignificance. Imagine the potential enrichment of your life that at present is locked up in the frustrated creativity of these millions of workers, held back by obsolete and exhausting methods of production, strangled by lack of control over their own productivity, warped by the insane rationale of capital-accumulation which pits one against all and makes life a mad scramble for economic survival. Here we begin to discover a real social identity—in people all over the world who are fighting to win control over their own lives we find ourselves.⁵²

Coming to terms with “the possibility of being in touch with our unconscious is, precisely, that if we are in touch with it, then we are in touch with humanity,”⁵³ then we are able to get rid of the fetters of egoboundness and egocentricity, thereby overcoming the monstrous cult of having (and only then is the mortal, idolatrous sin of estrangement from at-onement with humanity washed away), so that the City of Being may be inaugurated, crucially without seeking allies in the sky, either before or after the inauguration, since salvation *always* comes from below; and, in the secular realm, is maintained without any assistance “from above,”⁵⁴ in my view.

The deep, ubiquitous misery that has been descending upon humanity did not come from “heaven,” or from “hell,” or anywhere else, but from the principle of command (which, as we have seen, is closely connected with the having mode), as Mikhail Bakunin duly observed: “If there is a devil in human history, that devil is the principle of command. It alone, sustained by the ignorance and stupidity of the masses, without which it could not exist, is the source of all the catastrophes, all the crimes, and all the infamies of history.” And religion, which is “the opium of the people,”⁵⁵ is probably the single most noxious cause that has given rise to the principle of command. In other words, nothing is more inimical to freedom and democracy than spiritualizing secular issues and secularizing spiritual issues. The two realms must never be

conflated, because the price of religious superstition so far has been far too great. And if we persist in our superstitious beliefs and subsequent apathy and passivity, then before long there won't be a habitable earth to live on, and certainly no "heaven" to ascend to either, because genuine spirituality (even from a biblical point of view) presupposes love for humanity *by practical example in the here and now* (not just in words and in some unspecified future)—impossible as long as we are gangster pimping (and thus rotting) in the Faustian culture of "gain[ing] wealth, forgetting all but self." There is indeed much wisdom to be gained by reflecting on Mark 8:36 (for money hungry Christians, Mathew 6:24 is also worth looking up): "What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?"; except that one doesn't have to gain the whole world to lose one's soul. It is enough that one is sufficiently money hungry so that chasing the mighty dollar becomes one's *raison d'être*, surely a fundamentally wrong and immoral choice of enormous social and environmental consequence. Instead, our *raison d'être* should be fighting for social justice with an unswerving passion, forgetting none but self (at least that is the ideal that we ought to strive for). That is the essence of radical humanism—the only religion that leads to true salvation.

Notes and References

¹ *The Wealth of Nations*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976 (original 1776), Book III, ch. IV, p. 437.

² It bears stating that it wasn't industrial progress that created the "system of wage labor" and all the iniquities attending it, but the capitalists' monopolization of the producers' wealth (Forbath, "The Ambiguities of Free Labor: Labor and the Law in the Gilded Age," *Wisconsin Law Review*, 1985: 806 at 767-817).

³ Noam Chomsky, *Understanding Power*, London & NY: Vintage Press, 2002, p. 204.

⁴ The essence of socialism is understood in the left libertarian tradition to be *direct as opposed to proxy control by the workers over production*. That's the *core*. That's where socialism *begins*. Then you go on to other things. In other words, "real self-management is the direct management (without any separate leadership) of social production, distribution, and communication by workers and their communities." ("The Revolutionary Pleasure of Thinking for Yourself," online; no author, no date) Such movements for self-management have appeared briefly and sporadically in many places, in the form of workers' councils (with one notable exception, below): "sovereign assemblies of producers and neighbors that elect *delegates to coordinate their activities*. The delegates are not representatives, but carry out decisions already made by their assemblies," and they "can be recalled at any time should the general assembly feel that its decisions are not being rigorously carried out." (Ibid., emphasis added) By this standard, socialism did *not* exist in the Soviet Union (except briefly and partially in 1905 and 1917-1921), or in Eastern Europe (except in Hungary in 1956). Spain is the only country where libertarian socialism was experimented with on a *very* large scale, with very impressive results. But eventually it was violently destroyed by reactionary forces, chief among them the *USSR, backed by Western powers*, through Franco's fascist regime. It's not likely that there's any other way of overcoming contemporary barbarism than by instigating libertarian socialism, initially in one or a handful countries, but ultimately universally, since in the last analysis socialism will either be universal or it will not be at all. All things considered, efforts to instigate stateless socialism worldwide is a moral imperative rooted in the all-important need for long-term survival and universal welfare; it has nothing to do with daydreaming.

⁵ Ibid., Book V, ch. I, pt. III, art. II, pp. 302-303.

⁶ As Forbath notes ("The Ambiguities of Free Labor," p. 806), "The origins and functions of capitalist hierarchy had...little to do with efficiency... The development of the minute division of labor and the creation of pyramidal work organization took place not for reasons of technical superiority...but [for reasons of capital] accumulation...[and] it is at least an open question whether...hierarchical production is essential to a high material standard of living." (Forbath is relying on Stephen Marglin's study: *What Do Bosses Do? The Origins and Functions of Hierarchy in Capitalist Production*. Therefore, it's not surprising that, according to Marglin, "when workers are given control over decisions and goal setting, productivity rises dramatically" (this time cited in Chomsky, *Chomsky on Democracy and Education*, NY: RoutledgeFalmer, 2003, p. 102).

⁷ Case in point: the West's affluence is basically stolen property from the South, which Winston Churchill was kind enough to observe in a paper submitted to his Cabinet colleagues in January 1914: "we are not a young people with *an innocent record and a scanty inheritance*. We have engrossed to ourselves...*an altogether disproportionate share of the wealth and traffic of the world*. We have got all we want in territory, and our claim to be left in the unmolested enjoyment of vast and splendid possessions, *mainly acquired by violence, largely maintained by force*, often seems less reasonable to others than to us." (Cited in Clive Pointing, *Churchill*, Sinclair-Stevenson, 1994, p. 132; the italicised phrases are Churchill's own!) A similar but more contemporary observation was made by the chief founder of the policy sciences, Harold Lasswell: "Modern events have sharply reminded us that distribution depends on myth and violence (on faith and brigandage) as well as bargaining." (*Politics: Who Gets What, When, How*, Cleveland, Ohio: Meridian Books, 1958, p. 8.) Consider also the following: In 2005, John Perkins came out with *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man*, in which he showed the inner workings of the American empire through U.S. instruments like the World Bank, USAID and other "aid" organizations, all in the service of the 'corporatocracy,' as he calls it: "that fraternity of corporate, government, and banking heads whose goal is global empire." An abiding theme is, as is to be expected, the predatory and kleptocratic nature of Western finance (since conquest and expropriation are central features of the prevailing politico-economic system), hence how the U.S. employs the full armada of its political, military and economic muscle (strengthened in the first place by genocide, slavery and theft) to further enrich private corporations at the expense of humanity. The opening words:

Economic hit men (EHMs) are highly paid professionals who cheat countries around the globe out of trillions of dollars. They funnel money from the World Bank, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and other foreign "aid" organizations into the coffers of huge corporations and the pockets of a few wealthy families who control the planet's natural resources. Their tools include

fraudulent financial reports, rigged elections, payoffs, extortion, sex, and murder. They play a game as old as empire, but one that has taken on new and terrifying dimensions during this time of globalisation. I should know; I was an EHM.

⁸ *Days and Nights of Love and War* (Monthly Review, 1983), cited in Chomsky, *Chomsky on Anarchism*, Oakland (California): AK Press, 2005, p. 155.

⁹ Lasswell, op. cit., pp. 71-2; emphasis added.

¹⁰ *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, p. 63, available at www.scribd.com

¹¹ To illustrate, high levels of consumption in the West are contingent on deeper exploitation of raw materials in the South (hence deeper poverty), as well as higher levels of pollution export from core to periphery (which is perceived as a very good thing by the U.S. See Jim Vallette, "Export Our Filth to the Third World Says Summers – 'They Don't Live as Long Anyway'. Larry Summers' War Against the Earth," *CounterPunch*, 1999, <http://www.globalpolicy.org/socecon/envronmt/summers.htm>), along with higher energy consumption at home, including higher levels of long-distance road, air and ocean transport, hence more environmental degradation. Until we come to appreciate the natural albeit delicate interdependence of this world and how our artificial well-being translates into ill-being and devastation for much of the Third World (including the Second), until we explicitly refuse to implicitly embrace the following sick attitude: "We in the West are used to our lifestyles. We have to maintain it and somebody has to pay for it"—until that level of civilization is reached, we can hardly call ourselves humans. (Excepting those with severe mental impairment, people are responsible for the foreseeable consequences of their actions and inactions. It's a given that the market is a powerful force, which obviously doesn't recognize social value and does not respond to those without money, but it's nevertheless not commendable or wise to blame it on "the market" at the cost of doing nothing about the problem, since ultimately everything is under public control.)

Significantly, "most consumption engenders passivity; ... the need for speed and newness, which can only be satisfied by consumerism, reflects restlessness, the inner flight from oneself; ... looking for the next thing to do or the newest gadget to use is only a means of protecting oneself from being close to oneself or to another person. (Fromm, *To Have or To Be?*, London: Abacus, 1976, p. 174)

Sadly, Western politicians are not showing any willingness to tackle the problem of global warming head-on and in serious and meaningful ways. At best they are only tinkering with the problem around the edges. There is a window of opportunity that will be closed soon; but even if the opportunity is used, it is not likely to reverse some of the devastation that will be brought about by global warming. James Hansen, director of the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies, duly warned in *CBS 60 Minutes* (March 21, 2006) that "We have to, in the next 10 years, get off this exponential curve and begin to decrease the rate of growth of CO2 emissions. And then flatten it out. And before we get to the middle of the century, we've got to be on a declining curve. If that doesn't happen in 10 years, then I don't think we can keep global warming under one degree Celsius and that means we're going to, that there's a great danger of passing some of these tipping points. If the ice sheets begin to disintegrate, what can you do about it?"

¹² John Stauber and Sheldon Rampton, *Toxic Sludge is Good For You: Lies, Damn Lies and the Public Relations Industry*, Monroe (Maine): Common Courage Press, 1995, p. 206.

¹³ David Korten, *When Corporations Rule the World*, Bloomfield (CT): Kumerian Press, 2001, pp. 239-40.

¹⁴ London: Unwin Paperbacks, 1975, p. 5; *The Art of Loving* can be downloaded in its entirety at <http://d.scribd.com/docs/2ddo6o7ctd3vjok7xpe.pdf>

¹⁵ Specifically, with few exceptions, "marriage is a prison with golden bars" (Emma Goldman) at best and a form of "legalized prostitution" at worst. I say "legalized prostitution," because most women marry success objects (hence objectify men) and most men prostitute themselves for beauty (hence marry sex objects), which, after all, is one of the most potent drugs in the world (in other words, *both sexes perpetuate the having mode over the being mode*). So as long as each sex objectifies the other, both sexes do each other and themselves a disservice, because objectification leads to lack of respect for the person's humanity, thereby significantly diminishing the quality of the marriage. It is a given that female beauty is very hard to ignore (even heterosexual women would need to go around with a jack to keep their jaws from hitting the ground at the sight of beautiful women!), but it is nevertheless not impossible for men to relate to women on the basis of their inner qualities and human potentialities, and, conversely, for women to relate to men in the same way, while creating the social climate that will make the alienated pursuit of success in the bourgeois sense wholly, or at least far more, undesirable.

¹⁶ *To Have Or To Be?*, p. 125; this work can be downloaded in its entirety at <http://d.scribd.com/docs/12iftkif2bzabmhyh34t.pdf>

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 115.

¹⁸ “Does the Garrison State Threaten Civil Rights?” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 275, Civil Rights in America. (May, 1951), p. 115, at pp. 111-116.

¹⁹ Charles Knight, Project on Defense Alternatives, panel presentation at the Council on Foreign Relations, New York, 14 June 2000, on “U.S. Military-Strategic Ambitions: Expanding to Fill the post-Soviet Vacuum,” <http://www.comw.org/pda/0006vacuum.html>

²⁰ For disturbing insights into this dreadful but very real prospect, see Robert McNamara, “Apocalypse Soon,” *Foreign Policy*, May/June 2005; For insights into the realities of the space program, see Chomsky, *Hegemony or Survival*, 2003, ch. 6 & 9. For a bit of a technical discussion, see Carl Boggs (ed.), *Masters of War*, 2003, ch. 3. For official government statements on the offensive nature of the program, see Blum, *Killing Hope*, 2003, p. 384 (in ch. 56). For official government documents, see Air Force Space Command, *Strategic Master Plan FY04 and Beyond*, February 9, 2000, Executive Summary, www.thememoryhole.org/mil/space-command-plan-fy2004.pdf. US Space Command, *Vision for 2020*, http://www.middlepowers.org/gsi/docs/vision_2020.pdf. For a good analysis of the portents of the Japan-US missile defense collaboration, see Gordan Mitchell, “Japan-U.S. Missile Defense Collaboration: Rhetorically Delicious, Deceptively Dangerous,” *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*, Vol. 25:1 Winter 2001, www.pitt.edu/~gordonm/JPubs/JapanTMD.pdf

²¹ Fromm, “War Within Man,” p. 3 (it’s the same thing with fraud, for if a person feels compelled to defraud others [almost invariably, people with lust for money do feel such a compulsion and act on it whenever the opportunity arises, since the morally corrupting effect of money hunger is a plain, undeniable fact], it’s only because he doesn’t know who he is; he hasn’t yet discovered his innate morality and gotten in touch with his soul; he has yet to come to terms with the fact that a compromised integrity in dealing with others cannot be the sine qua non of potency and a productive orientation, the result of which is unhappiness for the defrauder, even though it’s likely to be masked with a happy face in social situations). This and all the other online articles by Fromm downloadable at <http://www.erich-fromm.de/e/index.htm>

²² Fromm, *The Fear of Freedom*, London: Ark Paperbacks, 1984, p. 139; this work can be downloaded in its entirety at <http://d.scribd.com/docs/1rxitmtbbe6i472d29mt.pdf>

²³ *Ethics*, Book 4, prop. 44, cited in Fromm, *To Have or To Be?*, p. 98; emphasis in original.

²⁴ First quote by Marx in Fromm, *To Have or To Be?*, p. 99. Second quote by Fromm in Fromm, *On Being Human*, New York and London: Continuum, 1994, p. 157.

At this point, it is important, I think, to identify the roots of the having orientation. According to Fromm, the roots are “one’s sense of powerlessness, one’s fear of life, one’s fear of the uncertain, [and] one’s distrust of people.” (*The Art of Being*, p. 119)

²⁵ “one of the realities of foreign aid: a means by which the poor in the wealthy societies pay the wealthy in the poor societies for their services to the wealthy in the wealthy societies” (Chomsky, *On Power and Ideology*, Québec and NY: Black Rose Books, 1987, 1995, p. 82). Which is a way of protecting the sanctity of the fifth freedom, defined as the freedom to dominate, exploit and rob. In other words, “aid is a device to compel the (Western) taxpayer to subsidize the wealthy and powerful, at home and abroad” (ibid., p. 83), so as to facilitate the expropriation of wealth from the poor and the working class, at home and abroad, in the latter case, crucially with the help of the IMF and WB (both *extraordinarily* human rights averse), who are guilty of theft on a scale that dwarfs all the great bank robberies in history combined. For an excellent work that demonstrates how corrupt the aid industry (including the UN system) is, see Graham Hancock, *Lords of Poverty*. See also Arundhati Roy, *Help that Hinders*, <http://mondediplo.com/2004/11/16roy>

²⁶ To verify this claim, see Chomsky, “Debt, Drugs and Democracy,” *NACLA Report on the Americas*, Vol. 33, No.1, Jul/Aug 1999, <http://www.chomsky.info/interviews/19990312.htm>. See also his “The People Always Pay,” *Guardian Unlimited*, Jan. 21, 1999, www.guardian.co.uk/world/1999/jan/21/debtrelief.development3

The recent so-called debt cancellations given to the HIPC (Highly Indebted Poor Countries) by the G8 should not be taken at face value, since they were cosmetic gestures “hiding a strengthening of the creditor countries’ dominant position.” (“CADTM Outraged at the G8’s Meanness over the Debt,” www.fuckyousa.com/Writings/CADTM_Outraged_at_the_G8.pdf). See also John Pilger, “G8 Will Not Ease Third World Poverty,” www.greenleft.org.au/2005/632/34388, and “The G8 Summit: A Circus and a Fraud,” *Znet*, June 24, 2005, www.zmag.org/sustainers/content/2005-06/24pilger.cfm, by the same author.

²⁷ Podur, *History Handbook*, “Non-Reformist Reparations for Africa: Repairing the Damages,” *Znet*, <http://www.zmag.org/Zmag/articles/february02podur.htm>. For some old albeit revealing figures of the in-versus outflows of capital to and from the South through FDI (Foreign Direct Investment), see Richard B. Du Boff, “Transferring Wealth from Underdeveloped to Developed Countries via Direct Foreign Investment:

Comment,” *Southern Economic Journal*, Vol. 38, No. 1. (Jul., 1971), pp. 118-121. Lawrence B. Krause, who is clearly pro-business, arrives at the following conclusion in one of his studies: “...earnings from [...] foreign operations by 1970 contributed between 20 and 25 percent of total U.S. corporate profits after taxes, a very considerable magnitude indeed.” (“The International Economic System and the Multinational Corporation,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 403, The Multinational Corporation. (Sep., 1972), p. 96 at pp. 93-103)

Some parts of the next paragraph in the main body are an adaptation from a debate between Richard Perle and Chomsky (available on Youtube, date unknown).

²⁸ *Coercion, Capital, and European States: 990-1990*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1992, pp. 70 & 30.

²⁹ Economic crimes are not only welcomed and supported, but are required, by law. Thus pharmaceutical companies are required, by law, to produce drugs for rich people to reduce wrinkles but not to save the lives of thousands of children in Africa every day who are dying from easily treatable diseases. Not only is this the core of Anglo-American corporate law, but the justification for it is taught in every economics department in the universities. And it is hailed in the press as the height of civilization.

³⁰ In some respects the arms trade is legal without being legitimate, since it’s responsible for a tremendous amount of repression, deaths, maiming, human rights abuses and suffering around the world. It’s also not lucrative for Western countries (because of “high government subsidies, tax breaks, insurance schemes and promotion for arms manufacturers,” all of which “costs governments more money than weapons producers generate for them”—Burrows), but its appeal to their leaderships lies in the fact that it’s a significant source of power (hence a defense of the having mode), since it keeps the domestic population “quiescent and obedient and passive. And international conflict is one of the best ways of doing it: if there’s a big [concocted] enemy around, people will abandon their rights, because you’ve got to survive. So the arms race is functional in that respect—it creates global tension and a mood of fear. It’s also functional for controlling the empire.” (Chomsky, *Understanding Power*, p. 70). For a good discussion of the arms trade and useful strategies for anti-arms trade activists, see Gideon Burrows, *The No-Nonsense Guide to the Arms Trade*.

³¹ IMF policies invariably have the following elements: “(1) radically reduce government spending on health, education and welfare; (2) privatize and deregulate state enterprise; (3) devalue the currency; (4) liberalize imports and remove restrictions on foreign investment; and (5) cut or constrain wages and eliminate or weaken mechanisms protecting labor.”(Kevin Danaher, *10 Reasons to Abolish the IMF and World Bank*, NY: Seven Stories, 2001, p. 11). For a very good general discussion of global poverty, its causes and potential solutions, see Jeremy Seabrook, *The No-Nonsense Guide to World Poverty*. For an important study on the policy roots of poverty, see *The Policy Roots of Economic Crisis and Poverty: A Multi-Country Participatory Assessment of Structural Adjustment*, prepared by SAPRIN, April 2002, www.saprin.org/SAPRIN_Findings.pdf. The executive summary is available at: www.saprin.org/SAPRIN_Exec_Summ_Eng.pdf. There is a somewhat significant bias in favor of privatization in this work. Still, it is an uncontroversial study, since it was supported by the UNDP, the EU, including the governments of Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany (even if the fora’s output was not embraced by the governments just mentioned), with inputs by, among others, the World Bank itself, even if the latter was understandably very unhappy with the outcome of the study, predictably refusing to learn anything from it, let alone allow the fora output to make its way into country programming or back to Washington, or into adjustment operations themselves.

The inference above that privatization is a bad thing might need some qualification. Thus, according to Chomsky (*Znet*, May 2005; paraphrased), “every single element of the neo-liberal programs is designed mainly to destroy democracy. Eliminating fixed currencies and freeing capital flight is no less inimical to democracy. By definition, privatization undermines democracy, since it takes things out of the public arena. For example, turning services into private control takes away everything that the government might want to do, under public pressure. So the system is basically designed in such a way that the state will lose the capacity to respond to its citizens and will be compelled to respond to concentrations of private power” [with privatization’s main benefits naturally flowing to those who are already privileged, since under the misnomer “free market capitalism” the only criterion of success is profit maximization for those who already have *much, much* more than they will *ever* need]. It is disingenuous, not least because private ownership of the means of production is a form of theft, as Proudhon demonstrated in *What is Property?*

³² *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives*, NY: Basic Books, 1997, p. 40.

³³ “Constant Conflict,” *Parameters*, Summer 1997, <http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article3011.htm>

³⁴ The French have a saying: “Les extrême se touchent.” Which rings true with respect to the fact that

Bolshevism, fascism and capitalism grew out of more or less Hegelian roots, which is why U.S. industrialists supported German Nazism, Italian fascism, and (contrary to rhetorical flights), even Russian Bolshevism (as George Orwell observed in his unpublished Introduction to *Animal Farm* (called “Literary Censorship in England,” available online at <http://www.brysons.net/teaching/csun/orwell.pdf>). As Paul Mattick observed in relation to the similarities between Bolshevism, fascism and capitalism (in his essay called “Bolshevism and Stalinism”): “In all essential aspects all three of these systems are identical and represent only various stages of the same development – a development which aims at manipulating the mass of the population by dictatorial governments in a more or less authoritarian fashion, in order to secure the government and the privileged social layers which support it and to enable those governments to participate in the international economy of today by preparing for war, waging war, and profiting by war.” For evidence that war is a golden time for state capitalism, see “War is a Racket,” by U.S. Marine Corps Major-General Smedley Darlington Butler, at www.ratical.org/ratville/CAH/warisaracket.pdf

³⁵ Significantly, *the person who is selfish does not love himself* (!), as Fromm demonstrates in his essay “Selfishness and Self-Love,” online.

³⁶ Fromm, “War Within Man,” p. 9; he mentions these all-important conditions on pp. 9-10. But even if these conditions were absent during the child’s upbringing, as they usually are, still, hope is not lost, because man has the capacity to give birth to himself through reason and brotherly love as an adult even if he was raised by moral monsters who have infected him with their toxic energy.

³⁷ Fromm, “Freedom in the Work Situation,” p. 4; online.

³⁸ “Exclusive love is a contradiction in itself. To be sure, it is not accidental that a certain person becomes the “object” of manifest love. ...love for a particular “object” is only the actualization and concentration of lingering love with regard to one person; it is not, as the idea of romantic love would have it, that there is only *the* one person in the world whom one can love, that it is the great chance of one’s life to find that person, and that love for him results in a withdrawal from all others. The kind of love which can only be experienced with regard to one person demonstrates by this very fact that it is not love but a sado-masochistic attachment.” (Fromm, *The Fear of Freedom*, p. 99) In other words, people either *stand and walk in love* (as opposed to *falling* in love, which is a great fallacy) or they don’t. Those who do are living in the being mode; those who don’t in the having mode.

³⁹ C.P. Otero (ed.), *Radical Priorities*, Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2003, pp. 192-3. Elsewhere, he says, aptly: “One might speculate, rather plausibly, that wealth and power tend to accrue to those who are ruthless, cunning, avaricious, self-seeking, lacking in sympathy and compassion, subservient to authority and willing to abandon principle for material gain.” (*For Reasons of State*, London & NY: The New Press, 2003, p. 355) Hence the saying: “Behind every big fortune there are major crimes.” We are fortunate enough in the West to have access to declassified documents that discuss policy imperatives frankly. For example, as George Kennan (head of the State Department policy planning staff in the late 1940s), who was responsible for shaping policy for the post-war period, said in a top-secret document from 1948 called *PPS23*:

We have about 50 percent of the world’s wealth, but only 6.3 percent of its population... In this situation, we cannot fail to be the object of envy and resentment. Our real task in the coming period is to devise a pattern of relationships which will permit us to maintain this position of disparity... We need not deceive ourselves that we can afford today the luxury of altruism and world-benefaction... We should cease to talk about vague and ... unreal objectives such as human rights, the raising of the living standards, and democratization. The day is not far off when we are going to have to deal in straight power concepts. The less we are then hampered by idealistic slogans, the better (emphasis added).

For the record, Kennan’s view is from the *dovish, liberal, humane* end of the spectrum. He was dismissed from the State Department largely because his views and policy recommendations were not hawkish and extreme enough! And since this was a top-secret study, it was naturally implied that the idealistic slogans have to be constantly trumpeted by the ideological system (the media, the schools, the universities and so on), in order to pacify the domestic population and to conceal the real goals of U.S. foreign policy, lest the citizenry’s ethical concerns be activated.

⁴⁰ Fromm, “Freedom in the Work Situation,” p. 8.

⁴¹ If they lack the skills to convey things pedagogically, verbally or in writing, they can always learn such skills. Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is an invaluable source for this purpose. Three of the four chapters of the book can be downloaded (even though the fourth is also indispensable) at <http://d.scribd.com/docs/6av4tyt4fx2k62xz811.pdf>

⁴² There was an important case against Unocal in California some years ago, in the light of human rights crimes

committed in Burma, by aiding and abetting the military junta's crimes. It did not succeed, but came surprisingly close, and is being used as a precedent against others. To change those laws is not easy. They are deeply embedded in the federal system. Any attempt to change them, even if possible, would simply inspire further popular understanding and resistance. It is a powerful system of control, but pretty fragile. There are lots of opportunities, and they are beginning to be used. For some useful insights, see Robert Benson, *Challenging corporate rule: the petition to revoke Unocal's charter as a guide to citizen action*.

⁴³ Fromm, "Our Way of Life Makes Us Miserable," pp. 3-4, online. For the record, the psychosocially harmful effects of mindless conformity are not to be taken lightly (it is not without good reason that Charles Mackay, a 19th century Scottish journalist, said, "Men go mad in herds, but only come to their senses one by one," cited in William Blum, *The Anti-Empire Report*, June 5th, 2009). For example, again according to Fromm, "Physical, especially psychosomatic illnesses, criminality, and drug addiction ... are largely forms of protest against coercion and boredom." (*To Have or To Be?* p. 186) The same thing can be said about bed-wetting, constipation and temper tantrums (which are forms of resistance to domination—Fromm calls them "the weapons of the helpless") in children (Fromm, *The Art of Being*, London: Constable, 1993, p. 113), as well as about compulsive sexuality in teens and adults.

Apropos of greed and envy, the reason they "are so strong [is] not because of their *inherent intensity* but because of the difficulty in resisting the public pressure to be a wolf with the wolves. Change the social climate, the values that are either approved or disapproved, and the change from selfishness to altruism will lose most of its difficulty. (*Ibid.*, p. 194; italics in original)

⁴⁴ Fromm, "Our Way of Life Makes Us Miserable," pp. 3-4, online. For the record, the psychosocially harmful effects of mindless conformity are not to be taken lightly (it is not without good reason that Charles Mackay, a 19th century Scottish journalist, said, "Men go mad in herds, but only come to their senses one by one," cited in William Blum, *The Anti-Empire Report*, June 5th, 2009). For example, again according to Fromm, "Physical, especially psychosomatic illnesses, criminality, and drug addiction ... are largely forms of protest against coercion and boredom." (*To Have or To Be?* p. 186) The same thing can be said about bed-wetting, constipation and temper tantrums (which are forms of resistance to domination—Fromm calls them "the weapons of the helpless") in children (Fromm, *The Art of Being*, London: Constable, 1993, p. 113), as well as about compulsive sexuality in teens and adults.

Apropos of greed and envy, the reason they "are so strong [is] not because of their *inherent intensity* but because of the difficulty in resisting the public pressure to be a wolf with the wolves. Change the social climate, the values that are either approved or disapproved, and the change from selfishness to altruism will lose most of its difficulty. (*Ibid.*, p. 194; italics in original)

⁴⁵ In point of fact, there is hardly any institution in the West that does not actively go to great lengths in attempts to legitimate the status quo. As Nancy Scheper-Hughes observes,

In advanced industrialized societies and in modern, bureaucratic, and welfare states, the institutions of violence generally operate...covertly. A whole array of educational, social welfare, medical, psychiatric, and legal experts collaborate in the management and control of sentiments and practices that threaten the stability of the state and the fragile consensus on which it claims to base its legitimacy. We can call these institutions, agents, and practices the "softer" forms of social control, the gloved hand of the state. But even the most "advanced" state can resort to threats of violence or to open violence against "disorderly" citizens whenever the normal institutions for generating social consensus are weakening or changing. (*Violence in War and Peace: An Anthology*, Oxford [UK]: Blackwell Publishing, 2004, p. 178)

And as Zbigniew Zingh observes, *The Washington Post's*, *The New York Times'*, and, especially, *The Wall Street Journal's*

primary target audience is the leadership cadre of society. They speak for the ownership class to the management class. These "newspapers" (I use the cautionary quotation marks around the word "newspapers" because of their predilection for uncritical amplification of official government policy and for blatant propaganda) seek to shape the opinions of the upper "management" echelons of society: the mid-level business executives, professors, lawyers, judges, teachers, doctors, other regional news editors and publishers, and government administrators. They, in turn, are expected to disseminate these approved opinions down into society in general. ("The Less Docile American," <http://www.ersarts.com/cgi-bin/pikie/ersarts/ersarts.py%3FTheLessDocileAmerican.html>). This article is a sequel to his excellent "The Docile American: The Nexus of God, Labor, Health Care and the Fear to Strike," *Dissident Voice*, February 13, 2007, <http://dissidentvoice.org/feb07/Zingh13.htm>)

The expectation is, of course, fulfilled in spectacular fashion. Still, every country in the West understandably has a growing number of disillusioned people who are involved in an informal, disorganized, activist dissident culture (through the Internet) that is marginalized by the mainstream (to verify the claim about disillusionment, dissidence, and marginalization, see John Dillin, "Voters Angry As Delegates Convene," *The Christian Science Monitor*, July 14, 1992, <http://www.csmonitor.com/1992/0714/14011.html>) Granted, this is an old study, but much the same results are likely to occur in new prospective studies once the Obama mania wears off and people become even more disillusioned over time than they are now, because Obama's deeds do not, in essence, differ from Bush's [which is a bit too charitable, because he even looks more aggressive and violent than Bush], even if Obama's style and rhetoric are much more impressive than his predecessor's). In any event, there is simply no escaping the fact that representative democracy is at best a very limited form of democracy and at worst necessarily largely a sham, which Walter Lippmann (the dean of U.S. journalists, a major theorist of liberal democracy and a veteran of the Creel Commission), true to his role as cultural manager and profound contempt for democracy, confirmed when he observed that "Electoral politics is a mechanical device, which is necessarily inadequate to ensure true representation." He elaborates:

...what the public does is not to express its opinions but to align itself for or against a proposal. If that theory is accepted, we must abandon the notion that democratic government can be the direct expression of the will of the people. We must abandon the notion that the people govern. Instead we must adopt the theory that, by their occasional mobilizations as a majority, people support or oppose the individuals who actually govern. We must say that the popular will does not direct continuously but that it intervenes occasionally. ... When public opinion attempts to govern directly it is either a failure or a tyranny. It is not able to master the problem intellectually, nor to deal with it except by wholesale impact. The theory of democracy has not recognized this truth because it has identified the functioning of government with the will of the people. This is a fiction. The intricate business of framing laws and of administering them through several hundred thousand public officials is in no sense the act of the voters nor a translation of their will. (Clinton Rossiter and James Lare, eds., *The Essential Lippmann: A Political Philosophy for Liberal Democracy*, New York: Random House, 1963, pp. 26, 106, 110)

Those who stubbornly maintain illusions about American democracy ought to consider another observation by Lippmann (from his essay "The Role of Force, Patronage, and Privilege," in *Public Opinion*):

The constitution was a candid attempt to limit the sphere of popular rule; the only democratic organ it was intended the government should possess was the House, based on a *suffrage highly limited by property qualifications* (p. 90; emphasis added).

The American people came to believe that their Constitution was a democratic instrument, and treated it as such. They owe that fiction to the victory of Thomas Jefferson, and a great conservative fiction it has been. It is a fair guess that if everyone had always regarded the Constitution as did the authors of it, the Constitution would have been violently overthrown, because loyalty to the Constitution and loyalty to democracy would have seemed incompatible. Jefferson resolved that paradox by teaching the American people to read the Constitution as an expression of democracy. He himself stopped there (p. 91).

The stereotype of democracy controlled the visible government; the corrections, the exceptions and adaptations of the American people to the real facts of their environment have had to be invisible, even when everybody knew all about them. It was only the words of the law, the speeches of politicians, the platforms, and the formal machinery of administration that have had to conform to the pristine image of democracy. (91-92)

⁴⁶ There are at least three senses in which the prevailing system is akin to the Fourth Reich: **1)** corporate capitalism was mostly imposed by radical judicial arrangements, not by legislation. The expansion of corporate rights was the work of both Federalist and Republican lawyers and judges removed from (formal) democratic processes. And it was the state courts, not legislators, that gave the corporate entities extraordinary rights, granting them rights of persons (with the proviso that they are immortal), actually, rights far beyond what mere flesh-and-blood persons could ever even dream of, meaning they have freedom of speech, can propagandize freely, advertise (i.e., coerce the public to pay for the privilege of being brainwashed), run elections, etc. And they are protected from inspection by the irrelevant citizenry and even by state authorities, in order to preserve these autocratic structures, which are mostly unaccountable to the public. And they are required legally to maximize power and profit no matter what effect that has on anyone else, even future generations. They are also required by law to externalize costs and risks (since power is largely what externalities are about). It would be illegal, according to corporate law, for corporate executives to act differently. In brief, corporations are pathological by legal requirement (the implication being that the

law has been manipulated by economic interests to such an extent as to make reforms meaningless *in the long run*), so much so that corporate social responsibility (CSR) is illegal, at least when it is genuine (for useful insights into the workings of CSR, see Joel Bakan, *The Corporation: The Pathological Pursuit of Profit and Power*, London: Constable, 2005, ch.2 and sources cited); **2**) more people are *made* to die of hunger and easily preventable diseases every 3 years under state capitalism than died in the 2nd World War (the amount of money that would be required to remedy this problem is a small fraction of America's yearly military budget, which is used not for defense but for offense. For the extremely high social and environmental costs of the West's insatiable appetite for economic growth, see Jim Kim et al. (eds.), *Dying for Growth*); **3**) "there was a massive recruitment of Nazi war criminals [by the CIA] at the war's end" (Norman Finkelstein, *The Holocaust Industry*, London: Verso, 2000, p. 73), in order to adopt Nazi counterinsurgency programs: doublespeak for 'aggression,' 'genocide,' and 'international terrorism,' in the true sense of the expressions (for details on U.S. emulation of Nazi counterinsurgency programs, see Linda Hunt, *Secret Agenda*; Christopher Simpson, *Blowback*; and Michael McClintock, *Instruments of Statecraft*. For Britain's horrible human rights practices generally, including its support for terrorism, see Mark Curtis, *Web of Deceit*. For details on America's post-war culture of terrorism and aggression, see William Blum, *Killing Hope* and *Rogue State*. For an account of America's horrifying crimes against humanity during the pre-UN Charter period, see David Stannard, *American Holocaust*. For the period 1492 to the present, see Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States*. For a 500-year overview of Western conquest of much of the world, see Chomsky, *Year 501*.) So yes, in a real enough sense, corporate (or state) capitalism is the Fourth Reich, if only because of the endless suffering that that this monstrous system is causing, even if it doesn't send people to the gas chamber. The long and short of it is that we *are* living under a totalitarian system, for as one of the more serious political scientists Robert Dahl observed (in his "Business and Politics: A Critical Appraisal of Political Science," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 53, No. 1. (Mar., 1959), p. 29 at pp. 1-34): "...much in the way of political theory ... depends on the assumptions one makes about the sources of political attitudes. ...if one assumes that political preferences are simply plugged into the system by leaders (business or otherwise) in order to extract what they wish from the system, then the model of plebiscitary democracy is substantially equivalent to the model of totalitarian rule."

⁴⁷ Abraham Maslow drew up man's "basic needs" in the following terms: "physiological and aesthetic needs, needs for safety, belongingness, love, esteem, self-actualization, knowledge and understanding." For an analysis of the common origin of such needs in the nature of man, see Fromm, *The Anatomy of Human Aggressiveness*, Fawcett Crest: 1973, ch. 10.

⁴⁸ Perhaps the following words by George Bernard Shaw could provide an explanation as to who opposes equality of income and why: "Between persons of equal income there is no social distinction except the distinction of merit. Money is nothing: character, conduct, and capacity are everything. Instead of all the workers being leveled down to low wage standards and all the rich leveled up to fashionable income standards, everybody under a system of equal incomes would find her and his own natural level. There would be great people and ordinary people and little people; but the great ones would always be those who have done great things, and never the idiots whose mothers had spoiled them and whose fathers had left them a hundred thousand a year; and the little would be persons of small minds and mean characters, and not poor persons who had never had a chance. That is why idiots are always in favor of inequality of income (their only chance of eminence), and the really great in favor of equality."

⁴⁹ When it comes to claims of benevolence by the rich and powerful (anywhere) they should not be taken seriously, for as Chomsky observes: "The cultural managers must have at hand the tools to do their work. And apart from the most cynical, planners must convince themselves of the justice of the actions, often monstrous, that they plan and implement. There are only two pretexts: self-defense and benevolence. It need not be assumed that use of the tools is mere deception or careerism, though sometimes it is. Nothing is easier than to convince oneself of the merits of actions and policies that serve self-interest. Expressions of benevolent intent, in particular, must be regarded with much caution: they can be taken seriously when the policies advocated happen to be harmful to self-interest, a historical category that is vanishingly small." (*Year 501: The Conquest Continues*, London: Verso, 1993, p. 75) For the record, entertainers, regardless of their level of remuneration, are cultural managers and propagandists, and their work, if it can be called that, derives from social policy determined by private power in tandem with state power.

⁵⁰ Otero, op. cit., p. 259.

⁵¹ Fromm argues that the having mode, or "the attitude centered on property and profit, necessarily produces the desire—indeed the need—for power... In the having mode, one's happiness lies in one's superiority over others, in one's power, and in the last analysis, in one's capacity to conquer, rob, kill. In the being mode it

lies in loving, sharing, giving.” (*To Have or To Be?* pp. 85-6). When Fromm talks about having as a mode of existence and experience, he has in mind what he calls ‘*characterological having*,’ as opposed to ‘*existential having*.’ It’s a given that humans need to have certain things in an existential sense in order to survive, like food, shelter and clothing. But this is different from having in the sense of a character structure, the latter entailing the ideological need to live *through* property relations and acquisition (meaning material things function as props for one’s *weak* sense of self), which is a practice that creates a great deal of alienation hence suffering, ultimately leading to insanity, even for those who dominate by virtue of their economic clout. Fromm delineates the dynamics of domination and submission thusly:

The common element in both submission and domination is the symbiotic nature of relatedness. Both persons involved have lost their integrity and freedom; they live on each other and from each other, satisfying their craving for closeness, yet suffering from the lack of inner strength and self-reliance which would require freedom and independence, and furthermore constantly threatened by the conscious or unconscious hostility which is bound to arise from the symbiotic relationship. The realization of the submissive (masochistic) or the domineering (sadistic) passion never leads to satisfaction. They have a self-propelling dynamism, and because no amount of submission, or domination (or possession, or fame) is enough to give a sense of identity and union, more and more of it is sought. The ultimate result of these passions is defeat. It cannot be otherwise; while these passions aim at the establishment of a sense of union, they destroy the sense of integrity. The person driven by any one of these passions actually becomes dependent on others; instead of developing his own individual being, he is dependent on those to whom he submits, or whom he dominates.” (*The Sane Society*, London: Routledge, 1955, pp. 28-29)

⁵² “The Revolutionary Pleasure of Thinking for Yourself.” See also David Korten, “We Are Hard-Wired to Care and Connect,” *YES! Magazine*, Fall 2008: Purple America, at: http://www.stwr.org/index2.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=3266&pop=1&page=0&Itemid=251

⁵³ Fromm, *On Being Human*, p. 78.

⁵⁴ In the spiritual realm, once salvation is attained in accord with a radical understanding of the Gospel and the Koran (since there is compelling evidence that they are in agreement on the prerequisite of salvation), it can never be lost. The notion that salvation comes from below in the spiritual realm is fully substantiated and brought to life in very compelling terms in “The Quiet Storm: Religion Versus Spirituality” (no author, no date), at <http://www.scribd.com/doc/16156035/The-Quiet-Storm-Religion-vs-Spirituality> For a much shorter documentation of, in essence, the same finding (as well as the hows and the whys of the agreement between the Gospel and the Koran mentioned above), see “One by One” (no author, no date), at <http://www.scribd.com/doc/16159270/One-by-One-Who-Is-Jesus-Let-Him-Speak-for-Himself> (Once you come to these webpages, just click on the download button, and then choose the pdf option. If prompted to sign up for a free account, all that’s required is a valid email address and creating a password for your new account at www.scribd.com)

⁵⁵ This term cannot properly be understood except by turning to the man, Marx, who coined it:

Religious distress is at the same time the *expression* of real distress and the *protest* against real distress. Religion is the sign of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of an unspiritual situation. It is the *opium* of the people. The abolition of religion as the *illusory* happiness of the people is required for their *real* happiness. The demand to give up the illusions about its condition is *the demand to give up a condition which needs illusions*. The criticism of religion is, therefore, *in embryo the criticism of the vale of woe, the halo of which is religion*. Criticism has plucked the imaginary flowers from the chain not so that man will wear the chain without any fantasy or consolation, but so that he will shake off the chain and cull the living flower. The criticism of religion disillusiones man, to make him think and act and shape his reality like a man who has been disillusioned and has come to reason, so that he will revolve around himself and therefore around his true sun. Religion is only the illusory sun, which revolves around man as long as he does not revolve around himself. (Quoted in Fromm, *On Being Human*, pp. 166-7; emphasis in original)

In *ibid.*, Fromm makes an observation that complements the above very nicely: “...the aim of life is not the drabness of making a living but the beauty of being. To Marx, in a socialist society [the former Soviet Union not having been one, as noted], when man has become fully himself, there is no need for religion, because the flowering quality of life will be expressed in the whole of daily life and not in a separate and necessarily alienated sector of life: religion.”

**WRITING WORTH
READING FROM
AROUND THE WORLD**

ColdType

www.coldtype.net