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Creating an Ecological Socialist Future

Arran Gare

The growth of transnational corporations and financial institutions together with developments in communication, information, transport and manufacturing technologies, have metamorphosed capitalism. It is now more aggressive, more powerful and more unmanageable than ever before. The global web of information and communication has annulled temporal/spatial distance for a new class of managers and speculators, emancipating them from territorial constraints. As Zygmunt Bauman observed:

Elites travel in space, and travel faster than ever before, but the spread and density of the power web they weave is not dependent on that travel. Thanks to the new 'body-less-ness' of power in its mainly financial form, the power-holders become truly ex-territorial even if, bodily, they happen to stay 'in place'.¹

As such people gain the power to move out of their locality at will, "others watch helplessly as the locality they inhabit moves out from under their feet."² This system is not only oppressing more people than ever, it is driving civilization inexorably towards global ecological destruction.³ As the most advanced studies of the greenhouse effect show that

Large swaths of the planet will be plunged into misery by climate change in the next 50 years, with many millions ravaged by hunger, water shortages and flooding... [P]arts of the Amazon rainforest will turn into desert by 2050, threatening the world with an unstoppable greenhouse effect.... Land temperatures will go up 6C by the end of the next century.⁴

Just when alternatives to capitalism are required most desperately, socialism has lost its credibility. Why? Did the partial implementation of socialism prove its inadequacy? Has critical consciousness been dissolved by capitalist hyperculture? Has the new de-territorialized power of the network society outflanked socialism? Or is something more complex involved? This situation calls for a re-assessment of the socialist ideas which once inspired people to long and heroic struggle. If the socially and environmentally destructive

imperatives of globalized capitalism are to be overcome and global ecological destruction avoided, it is first necessary to understand what we have lost and why. With this understanding we must then forge a new path into the future,

Utopias and the Significance of Their Loss

While there were clearly differences between socialist movements, in retrospect we can see they had far more in common than was once believed. Firstly, their proponents were inspired by a vision of the future in which improvements in the means of production generated by capitalism would be utilized to benefit all humanity. This was combined with a coherent interpretation of history to account for how society had arrived at its present state and some idea of what kinds of action and struggle would be necessary to realize their visions of the future. We can see that people were living one of several versions of a grand narrative. They experienced themselves as participants in an unfinished story defining the past and the present state of affairs and projecting a future, a future which while building on past achievements, would overcome present problems; a future they were participating in creating.

That is, people were inspired by utopias. A utopia transcends the present, putting the existing social order into question and forcing people to experience its contingency. It is a dream; but contrary to prejudice, it is a dream that wants to be realized. As Paul Ricoeur noted, "A utopia shatters a given order and it is only when it starts shattering order that it is a utopia. A utopia is then always in the process of being realized."⁵ It was such utopian visions which inspired people in the past to their heroic efforts to create a better world.

As participants in realizing a utopia, people were provided with a totalizing perspective to grasp the past and the present. With the loss of the utopian dream we are losing this totalizing perspective and thereby the ability to understand ourselves. We are left living through an ever recurring present with at best a fading nostalgia for a past which seemed to have a future. It is from the perspective of a society which had not yet completely lost its utopian visions and corresponding perspectives, but anticipating this loss, that this ever recurring present becomes

comprehensible. In a passage which reads like an account of the postmodern condition, Karl Mannheim wrote 1929:

Whenever the utopia disappears, history ceases to be a process leading to an ultimate end. The frame of reference according to which we evaluate facts vanishes and we are left with a series of events all equal as far as their inner significance is concerned. The concept of historical time which led to qualitative different epochs disappears, and history becomes more and more like undifferentiated space. All those elements of thought which are rooted in utopias are now viewed from a sceptical relativist point of view.⁶

Mannheim speculated on the effect of a future condition utterly devoid of utopian elements: "[T]he complete elimination of reality-transcending elements from our world would lead us to a 'matter-of-factness' which ultimately would mean the decay of the human will."⁷

Ricoeur, reviving Mannheim's insights, has argued that the death of utopia would be the death of society, since society would no longer have any project, any prospective goals.⁸ Society is not entirely dead. There is still the utopia of the neo-liberals, a world completely dominated by consumer sovereignty as expressed through free markets, with the realm of politics as well as economics, consumers as well as natural resources, workers, managers and entrepreneurs, constrained by competition to function as raw material and efficient components of the world economy. When realized, this will not only maximize the available quantity of goods and range of choices available to consumers, but continually generate new products and new choices to titillate people's appetites; or at least the appetites of those who have not yet been rendered redundant by technological progress. Since welfare institutions and institutions protecting national economies have not yet been totally dismantled, this vision still retains a utopian distance from reality and still inspires people. But the community of people who previously were inspired by socialism, at least for the time being, is dead.

Why the Old Socialist Utopias Failed

Why is this so? The strengths and weaknesses of socialism are most clearly revealed in the ideas of Marx and the Marxists. Marx spoke of a future society in which the dehumanizing

processes of capitalism had been overcome, where I would be able "to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticise after dinner, just as I have a mind."⁹ But he also pointed out that capitalist society tends to pervert the thinking of even those opposed to it. In characterizing the first phase of communism, crude communism, he wrote:

The category of *labourer* is not done away with, but extended to all men... Just as the woman passes from marriage to general prostitution, so the entire world of wealth ... passes from the relationship of exclusive marriage with the owner of private property to a state of universal prostitution with the community. In negating the *personality* of man in every sphere, this type of communism is really nothing but the logical expression of private property, which is this negation. General *envy* constituting itself as a power is the disguise in which *avarice* re-establishes itself and satisfies itself, only in *another* way. ... The crude communism is only the consummation of this envy and of this levelling down proceeding from the *preconceived* minimum. ... How little this annulment of private property is really an appropriation is in fact proved by the abstract negation of the entire world of culture and civilization, the regression of the *unnatural* simplicity of the *poor and undemanding* man who has not only failed to go beyond private property, but has not yet even attained to it.¹⁰

While Marx never abandoned his utopian vision, it became the esoteric content of his work. In *The Communist Manifesto* and most of his subsequent works, he addressed himself first of all to oppressed workers, the proletariat. The proletariat were portrayed as the only significant actors in realizing socialism; as though socialism expressed only their interests rather than being of universal interest. Marx spoke of the future as a state in which the fetters on productive forces have been removed, where "the proletariat will use its political supremacy to ... centralise all instruments of production in the hands of the State, i.e., of the proletariat organised as the ruling class; and to increase the total productive forces as quickly as possible."¹¹ Here the proletariat, instead of being dissolved along with the capitalist mode of production which constitutes them as the laboring class, replace the bourgeoisie as organizers of production. They are portrayed as an alternative ruling class. The ultimate goal of society is

represented as the same as the ultimate goal by capitalist society - to increase indefinitely the production of goods for consumption. Although it was opposed by such Marxists as Aleksandr Bogdanov, Iurii Lunacharsky, Ernst Bloch and Herbert Marcuse, the promotion of this vision of the future by communists, and attempts to realize it in the former Soviet Union and other supposedly communist countries, severely repressed the deeper utopian dimension of Marx's thought. While striving to overcome oppression and defending themselves from outside attack, communists in turn created oppressive societies which matched the ecological destructiveness of capitalism. The identification of such societies with socialism has seriously weakened not only Marxism, but all socialist opposition to capitalism.

Focussing exclusively on the proletariat (while dismissing all people who are neither proletarians nor bourgeois as 'petty bourgeois') also vitiated the orthodox Marxist analysis of history. If crude communism is a defective vision of the future, it is defective largely because it is the vision of people who are an integral component of capitalist society, people who conceived the whole of history in relation to the existing social form. As Marx himself noted: "What is called historical evolution depends in general on the fact that the latest form regards earlier ones as stages in the development of itself..."¹² But history is much more complex, and the future is always open, and those who fundamentally change society are those who are able to create new social forms. The proletariat are the equivalent of the slaves in Ancient society or the serfs in medieval society. Although slaves and serfs often rebelled and in doing so weakened the order they were rebelling against, they did not establish radically new social forms. The impetus for creating new social forms came from people who had escaped from the dominant mode of production, people whose consciousness developed with new modes of production which they had been able to establish within the niches provided by the dominant mode. The backbone of feudal society was provided by the Christian monasteries which had been able to establish new social forms within the niches provided by the Roman Empire. The bourgeoisie, as an effective class, was made possible by the towns and cities, originally based on craft industries and commerce, which had formed, slowly developed and then increased their power throughout the Middle Ages. Providing refuge for people fleeing feudal relations

of production these towns generated an economy and culture on which members of the old ruling class became increasingly dependent. The commercial capitalism of these towns generated the conditions for the emergence of industrial capitalism, and it was through the extension of commerce organized through towns and cities that the bourgeoisie was able to challenge and then dominate other classes, including the peasantry, and impose a capitalist mode of production on the whole of society, reforming all the institutions which had developed under feudalism to function within this new mode of production.¹³

An Ecological Socialist Utopia

What these analyses suggest is that a socialist engagement with the ecological crisis under present circumstances, to be effective, must combine a critical analysis of the socially and environmentally destructive imperatives of globalizing capitalism with the reconstruction of a utopian vision of the future, a vision within which the problems and class divisions of the present have been resolved; and to reveal how to begin creating this new mode of production from within capitalism. This vision of the future should be much more radical than orthodox socialists have been prepared to consider, a vision which not merely calls for more of what we presently have but which affirms values for the whole of humanity unrealizable under the present regime. If environmental destruction is to be overcome it is not only necessary to expose and attack the exploitation and destruction of the existing social order. It is necessary to provide a compelling alternative to the consumerism of the affluent to which most people in the world now aspire, and justify this alternative.¹⁴ It is necessary to justify, affirm and celebrate the value of human creativity, sociality, sensitivity and cultural life, and beyond this, of all life, practically and theoretically in a way barely imaginable, at least under normal circumstances, within a capitalist regime.

What kind of socio-economic order could replace capitalism? The market, which reduces everything and everyone to instruments and mystifies the relationships between people and between humanity and nature, not only does not provide the feedback necessary to preserve the environment, but steers economic activity towards its destruction. It must be severely

constrained by any future socio-economic formation.¹⁵ However, there is more to environmental destruction than the imperatives of the market as such. What has facilitated such destruction has been the structures of power associated with the financial, organizational and regional differentiation, both within and between nations, created by this market. These power structures have stunted the development of or subverted the institutions which could have controlled the market's destructive tendencies.¹⁶ The greatest environmental destruction occurs with regional exploitation, where those whose lives are adversely affected by such destruction, the poor of the peripheries of the world economy, have been rendered powerless against it. More fundamentally, people are now dominated by a mechanistic cosmology according to which life can be nothing but a struggle for survival and domination, nature and people when not viewed as threats, can only be construed as resources to be used efficiently, and the only value to which anyone can aspire is to have more power to satisfy their appetites. With this cosmology people have been blinded to the natural and social destruction wrought by capitalism and rendered incapable of even imagining that there could be a better form of society.

To augment the environmental conditions of human life will require the creation of a socio-economic formation which eliminates or controls the destructive imperatives of the market, a formation free of present hierarchies of power between regions, nations and classes and free from the division between organizers and organized. This will be possible only if the mechanistic world-view is replaced by a new cosmology according to which the ends of social life can be redefined from maximizing the production and consumption of commodities to the development of the potentialities of each individual to participate as fully as possible in the creative becoming of nature, society and culture. Then, as Marx put it, "[w]e shall have an association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all."¹⁷

While much work is required to fully develop this alternative vision of the future, it is sufficiently specified to begin thinking about how we could begin to realize it. The present state of global capitalism makes it unlikely that a class struggle led by the proletariat could

realize this vision of the future. Overcoming the present order must be reconceived on the basis of a more complex understanding of the history of civilization and of present societies. If the way feudalism was replaced by capitalism is any guide, capitalism will be undermined by those people who are able to develop new socio-economic forms within the environment it has created, forms which once established can be developed and strengthened to provide the foundation from which the capitalist mode of production and its corresponding social forms can be overwhelmed. The problem for eco-socialists is then how to establish the requisite social forms within the environment created by the existing global economy.

The State of Anglophone Nations

The possibilities open to people to act against the destructive imperatives of the global market vary tremendously throughout the world. What steps and paths might be open to people in Africa or India might not be open to people in South America or Eastern Europe. Western Europe, with the exception of Great Britain, already appears to be responding differently to the new phase of capitalism than USA, Canada, New Zealand or Australia.¹⁸ It is in Anglophone countries, in which industrial capitalism originated and has been most deeply entrenched, that the last phase of capitalism has been most fully embraced and alternative visions most fully eliminated. These countries, where each individual consumes more resources and produces more pollution than anywhere else on earth, are also doing most to power the globalization of the world economy, to undermine anti-systemic movements, and to undermine the conditions for addressing environmental problems. For this reason I will focus on the prospects for socialist action in such countries.

As noted, the integration at a global level of transnational organizations and the decentralization of capital accumulation have profoundly disrupted local societies, and this is particularly true in Anglophone nations. Here, as John Ralston Saul noted, "we are now in the midst of a *coup d'état* in slow motion."¹⁹ The managerial revolution, described by James Burnham in 1942,²⁰ is completing itself in a new form and is now unravelling all the democratic advances that were made following the Great Depression and the Second World

War. Under pressure from these managers and their ideologues, the economists, all major political parties in these countries have embraced "neo-liberalism", dismantling trade barriers and controls over financial institutions, freeing transnational corporations to move capital around the world without constraint, and reducing the cost of labor and increasing the financial incentives to business. The wages and salaries and conditions of most of the non-managerial workforce have declined, security of employment has disappeared, tax revenues required to fund social services have plummeted and social security nets are being dismantled. In a world in which between 1960 and 1991 the top 20% of the world's population increased its share of world-wide income from 30% to 60%, between 1973 and 1990,²¹ real hourly wages in the US (leaving aside benefits) in the private business economy fell by 12%, and failed to rise at all between 1990 and 1997.²² Such changes are associated with the economic decline and depopulation of whole regions, the north-west of England and the mid-west of the United States being the most obvious examples. Most dramatically affected are rural communities. The growing control by agribusinesses over the methods of agriculture, over prices of both agricultural inputs and produce has been steadily reducing margins to farmers, driving increasing numbers off their farms and forcing the remainder to overexploit their land to avoid bankruptcy.²³ As the farmers have left, the towns which had been the centres of rural life, have decayed.

All Anglophone societies are moving towards (and beyond) the kind of society which emerged in Britain under the reign of Thatcher, a society in which 30% of the population are marginalized and excluded from the economy, 30% of the population have structurally insecure employment, and only 40% of the population have secure incomes.²⁴ For governments of these countries, the marginalized are not an economic problem but a law and order problem. In USA, 5 million people are now in prison, on probation or on parole. Poverty is being simultaneously created and criminalized. Above those excluded from the economy are the growing army of part-time, casualized, contract and self-employed workers, including professionals of all kinds, often having been sacked and then rehired on a temporary, part-time basis. Global competition pits members of this middle sector against

each other both within and between nations, destroys their craftsmanship and professionalism and continually threatens to drop them out of the economy altogether. Those above this class include the growing ranks of managers and people living on speculative investments in property, shares and currencies. The power of these managers is manifest in their incomes. In 1978 corporate chief executives in USA earned 60 times as much as the average worker; in 1989 this had increased to 122 times, and in 1995 to 173 times.²⁵ But even corporate executives are in constant fear of losing their jobs. Politicians of both the right and purported left have used and continue to use the full legislative and executive power of the state to augment the power of transnational corporations and the new globalized managerial class and to undermine all points of opposition to them. There has been a massive concentration of media ownership, the autonomy of educational and research institutions is being destroyed and in politics, opposition to neo-liberalism has been taken off the agenda. There is no end in sight. With further subordination of these economies to the global economy, as wage, salary and contract workers face unfettered competition for employment from both further advances in labour-saving technology and the global reserve of unemployed and semi-employed, it is inevitable that even greater proportions of the populations of these countries will be excluded or marginalized by the economy, and the careers of those still employed will become more precarious.

What all this would suggest is that in the countries which are most environmentally destructive and which are doing most to create the conditions which will make addressing environmental problems impossible, people in these countries are being forced into struggles for economic survival which render them virtually powerless.

Prospects within Anglophone Nations

But is this the case? The new class of globally oriented managers and speculators and their servants have created a political and communication system which has not merely enabled them to ignore or deny the destructive effects of their actions, but has rendered them incapable of acknowledging the problems they are creating. This is a classic instance of what

Kent Flannery called 'hypercoherence', the situation in which complex institutions become increasingly self-serving to the detriment of the ecological and social systems from which they emerged and upon which, ultimately, they are dependent.²⁶ It is in such circumstances, precisely when these institutions appear all powerful, that the whole system is most likely to fall apart. The collapse of the Soviet Union illustrated this. In Anglophone countries, as in the last days of the Soviet Union, figures are published showing that life has never been better, economic output is increasing, share prices are close to record heights, there is almost full employment and environmental and other such problems are being addressed. But people know that their own conditions are deteriorating. They are losing what is left of their economic security and if they are not unemployed, they are having to work harder than ever to retain what they have. And more people are becoming aware at some level that an economy exponentially expanding its use of reserves, destroying its resources and increasing its rate of pollution cannot survive indefinitely. Globalization means the previously privileged working and middle classes of core zones of the world economy are beginning to be excluded from the spoils of capitalist exploitation of semi-peripheries and peripheries and are coming to experience the downside of capitalism which had previously been borne by the impoverished of these exploited regions. Reflecting on this, the US Deputy Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers was obliged to acknowledge, 'a child born today in New York is less likely to live to the age of five than a child born in Shanghai.'²⁷ In effect, the Third World, previously controlled and exploited from the core zones of the world economy from a distance, is being created within the borders of the countries containing the core zones.

It is this, along with various technological developments, which make new directions possible, and perhaps, inevitable. Jonathan Friedman concluded on the basis of his study of the effects of globalization, "[d]isorder in the system produces simultaneously an era of cultural creativity and of social reorganization. It includes economic and personal depression as a triggering condition which may lead to the exhilaration of newfound selfhood..."²⁸ The proliferation of radical movements, whether religious fundamentalist, right-wing communitarian or whatever, is indicative of this. The problem with such movements is that

they do not properly confront what is causing people's immediate and humanity's long-term problems; nor do they provide real solutions. Ecological socialism, which identifies the ultimate cause of social and environmental destruction in the dynamics of global capitalism and is able to reveal its effects on regions, nations, individuals and the environment, has a clear advantage in this regard. It has the potential to align people's anxieties, fears and concerns with problems confronting all humanity by showing their common source. In this way it has the potential to reveal the common interest of not only oppressed individuals, classes and communities, but the whole of humanity in overcoming these dynamics.

New ways of thinking and proposals for new kinds of organization, to be effective, must first capture people's imaginations. As I have argued, this involves revealing the relationship between their own lives, the problems they are facing and the broader problems of society with a vision of the future. It involves showing them how to act now, from within the present situation, to overcome these problems. The question which must be asked is, What kind of action can be taken now, by people living in Anglophone nations, against the prevailing order to create a new future? It appears there is no hope, at least in the short term, of deflecting national politics in these countries away from neo-liberalism with the commitment to subordinating national economies to the global economy (although this does not mean that environmentalists should give up their efforts to create and advance green political parties). What then can be done? One option is to work towards creating new socio-economic forms at local levels. The dissolution of local communities by ex-territorial powers should be fought, thereby providing somewhere, other than right-wing communitarian movements, for people to escape to.

Eco-Socialism at the Local Level

The challenge is to create a network of mutually supporting, partially autonomous alternative local economic systems which can function as stepping stones for transforming the whole of society and eventually for participating in the creation of an ecologically sustainable world civilization. Such local economies have already begun to emerge, and there is now a

considerable body of work showing what is required to establish and develop them.²⁹ The central problem of declining regions is a downward spiral during which wealth and resources are drained off because the region is in decline. Individuals, acting according to their own immediate interests, for instance banking with national or transnational banks which never lend to locals, or shopping outside the local community, destroy the economic foundations of these communities. The solution involves reversing this process, generating an upward spiral. There are a number of steps which need to be taken. To begin with, it is necessary to control the flow of money by establishing local credit societies or banks, and even local currencies which oblige people to spend what they earn in the local community. To reduce dependence on the outside economy it is necessary to become more self-reliant. It is necessary to develop local sources of energy, to reduce the consumption of energy and in rural areas, to develop organic and other low-external-input types of agriculture.

Because there can be little competition and because people must be satisfied as much as possible with what is locally available or producible, a new orientation to work and consumption is required. To inspire people to work efficiently and to free them from insatiable greed of consumer society it is necessary to foster an economy where people are able to gain fulfilment through their work.³⁰ This means promoting, craftsmanship and professionalism, a new aesthetic sensitivity to the world and the products of craftsmanship, and allowing people to achieve the satisfaction which comes from working for the good of society. It is necessary to create educational institutions, newspapers, printing presses and radio stations to cultivate this new orientation to life and the potentialities of people in the local region. Crucially, it is necessary for people to utilize and develop the new electronic forms of communication. What is required to achieve all these things is the development of co-operatives, essentially worker owned and controlled enterprises, which can ensure continued control and employment, even when enterprises are not making profits.

All these steps, which when taken have simultaneously created local economic stability and full employment, are also creating economies which promote environmental sustainability and are withdrawing people from the environmentally destructive juggernaut of

the global economy. While the Mondragon experiment is the most well known of these, it is only one among many.³¹ Such measures have been successfully implemented throughout the world. While many of the localities involved have been rural communities or small towns, parts of major cities in decline have revived their economies through taking such measures. What this means is that ecologically viable proto-socialist modes of production are being established within advanced capitalist countries as the only effective response to developments which are intensifying and will continue to intensify. More and more people will need to embrace and commit themselves to such forms if they are not to lose their livelihoods. What is required is, firstly, further such developments along these lines. But then it will be necessary to consider what will be required for the continued success and flourishing of such local economies.

To begin with, there is likely to be little resistance from the mainstream economy and political institutions. After all, such local economies are likely to reduce demands on social security and police forces. But with their further development, as they become more numerous, link up to support each other and become more prosperous, and become power bases for forays into national and international politics, they are bound to provoke aggression from the mainstream economy. They will be seen both as a threat and as a new frontier for exploitation. Increasingly, their members will have to consider the field of power and how they can sustain themselves and expand within it. Threats to these communities will require more radical developments to sustain their autonomy. To begin with, it will be necessary to consider more carefully what kind of economic relations need to be developed to avoid collapsing back into a capitalist mode of production. This will involve working out how to maintain democratic control within economic enterprises as these become larger and more complex and how to organize exchanges with other local economies based on similar principles and with the capitalist economy.³² It will be necessary to work out, in an increasingly hostile environment, how to organize politically to sustain these communities and, more broadly, to neutralize hostility from, then to take over and transform existing local, national and international political institutions. Much creative work will be required to

develop genuinely democratic political forms.³³ Such developments will necessitate an increasing cultural differentiation and then a concerted effort to develop an alternative culture from mainstream society, utilizing the new forms of media as radicals in the past succeeded by using the printing press.

The Culture of Ecological Socialism

Ultimately, the struggle to create an ecological socialist economy will be determined by the ability of its proponents to create a culture superior to the culture of capitalist societies. The development of local economies in order to preserve people's livelihoods requires a transcendence of the prevailing economic categories, the 'forms of existence' of capitalist economy. While capitalism, particularly in its latest stage of development, is awesomely efficient at mass production of goods, it undermines all non-instrumental values. It debases or destroys everything through which people have gained a sense of their identity, whether this be the work they engaged in, the products of such work or the 'services' they provide. Furthermore, the logic of profit maximization imposes defective forms of technology. This has become particularly evident in information technology where a sequence of Microsoft operating systems, increasingly bug ridden and demanding continual updating of software and computer hardware, have been imposed on people - up until the introduction of Linux, a far superior operating system developed in the public domain based on a gift economy. To the extent that local economies have to enter into trade with the capitalist economy, it is by offering what an economy dominated by commodity fetishism cannot provide that such ecological socialist economies will have an advantage. In other words, not only is it necessary to overcome commodity fetishism and to treat work as creative social expression in order to gain independence for and democratic control over local economies and to utilize more efficient forms of technology. The cultivation of such work will be the condition for their continuing economic success.

This is an important start. However, the preservation and further development of these economies will require the cultivation of values and a vibrancy which inspires commitment. It

will require the development of people's organizational abilities to run democratically complex economic enterprises and to create and participate in genuinely democratic political organization, and a complex understanding of the economic, social, political and psychological dynamics of both their own and capitalist society. It will also require the cultivation and maintenance of a work ethic which insulates people from the attractions of a consumer culture and the associated tendency to commodity fetishism. To achieve these ends, it will be necessary to develop a new culture, a new understanding of humanity and its place in the cosmos in practice and in theory. In particular, it will be necessary to produce new historical narratives, including a new grand narratives, to reorient people. This is necessary to provide individuals, cooperatives and communities with identities as actors in the struggle to overcome the global ecological crisis and to create the new future.

The development of such a culture should not be as difficult as might first appear. As advances in philosophy and science have undermined the mechanistic and social Darwinist cosmology which at present legitimates capitalism, and as they have begun to justify and develop a conception of humans as social, creative beings within a dynamic nature, the autonomy of educational and research institutions has been severely curtailed.³⁴ At the same time, through their domination by market imperatives, art, music, the writing of history and literature have been trivialized. Capitalism no longer provides the conditions for the further advancement of philosophy, science and the arts, or even the best forms of technology. What is required for the development of the requisite cosmology and a revival of the arts is the creation of the conditions under which people have the means and are free of external constraints to advance intellectual and artistic inquiry.³⁵

To create and develop this new culture a far greater effort will be required to develop the potentialities of people than occurs within a capitalist society. This will involve creating educational institutions, from kindergartens to universities, which socialize people into a culture of creativity and sensitivity in which all people will become simultaneously workers, horticulturalists, engineers, computer programmers, managers, historians, philosophers, scientists, poets, musicians and artists, and will take the development of people's

potentialities to participate in this culture of creativity as the ultimate end of society. Only in this way will such eco-socialist socio-economic forms be able to survive, challenge, prevail over and then subordinate the social mechanisms of the capitalist mode of production.

¹ Zygmunt Bauman, "Time and Class", *Arena Journal*, New Series, No.10, 1988, 69-84, p.77. This is the subject of Manuel Castells monumental three volumed study, *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture*, Oxford: Blackwells, 1996-98; esp. Volume 1, *The Rise of the Network Society*.

² Bauman, loc.cit.

³ For an analysis of this, see Stephen G. Bunker in *Underdeveloping the Amazon*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1988 and the essays in Martin O'Connor, *Is Capitalism Unsustainable?*, N.Y.: Guilford Press, 1994.

⁴ Paul Brown, *The Guardian Weekly*, 159, 19, Nov.8, 1998, 1, reporting on "Climate Change and its impacts: Some highlights from the ongoing UK research programme: a first look at results from the Hadley Centre's new climate model" November, 1998.

⁵ Paul Ricoeur, *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*, N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1986, p.273.

⁶ Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, trans. Louis Wirth and Edward Shils, San Diago: HBJ, 1936, p.253.

⁷ Ibid. p.262.

⁸ Ricoeur, op.cit., p.xxi.

⁹ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "The German Ideology", *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed., N.Y.: Norton, 1978, p.160.

¹⁰ Karl Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844", *The Marx-Engels Reader*, op.cit., p.82f.

¹¹ Marx and Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party", *The Marx-Engels Reader*, op.cit., p.490.

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- ¹² Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, trans. S.W. Ryazaskaya, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1970, p.211.
- ¹³ On this, see Stewart R. Clegg, *Frameworks of Power*, London: Sage, 1989, p.242ff.
- ¹⁴ The best analysis of this consumerism and its insatiability is provided by Baudrillard. See *Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings*, ed. Mark Poster, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988.
- ¹⁵ This is the 'second contradiction' of capitalism.
- ¹⁶ Stephen G. Bunker in *Underdeveloping the Amazon*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1988, shows how this has occurred.
- ¹⁷ Marx and Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party", op. cit. p.491.
- ¹⁸ Some idea of the creative response to globalization coming from Europe can be gained from Hans-Peter Martin & Harald Schumann, *The Global Trap: Globalization & the Assault on Democracy & Prosperity* [1996], trans. Peter Carmiller, London and N.Y.: Zed Books, 1997.
- ¹⁹ John Ralston Saul, *The Unconscious Civilization*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1997, p.94.
- ²⁰ See James Burnham, *The Managerial Revolution*, [1942] Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962. The new phase of the managerial revolution involves managers using their positions to become capitalists rather than simply replacing capitalists.
- ²¹ Kim Moody, *Workers in a Lean World*, London: Verso, 1997, p.134 & 188.
- ²² Robert Brenner, "The Economics of Global Turbulence", *New Left Review*, 229, May/June 1998, p.3. While there are occasional increases in wages associated with upswings in the business cycle, these are more than offset by declines during the regular, eight yearly recessions.
- ²³ For a description of this see "Exporting Recession: The USA Pays the Price", Jon Bennett, with Susan George, *The Hunger Machine*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987, Ch.6.
- ²⁴ W. Hutton, *The State We're In*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1995, p.105.
- ²⁵ Dorothy Zinberg, *The Australian*, Wed., Jan 21, 1998, p.41.

²⁶ Kent V. Flannery, "The Cultural Evolution of Civilizations" *Annual Review of Ecology and Systematics*, 1972, 3:339-426. Flannery's work has been developed by Bunker to characterize the relationship between the core zones and the peripheries of the global economy in *Underdeveloping the Amazon*, op.cit. esp. p.248.

²⁷ Cited by Brenner, op.cit., p.4.

²⁸ Jonathan Friedman, *Cultural Identity & Global Process*, London: Sage, 1994, p.252.

²⁹ Richard Douthwaite, *Short Circuit: Strengthening Local Economies for Security in an Unstable World*, Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 1996, provides an excellent review of work and achievements towards this end.

³⁰ Hannah Arendt noted of people whose work had been reduced to unfulfilling labor that spare time "is never spent on anything but consumption, and the more time left to him, the greedier and more craving his appetites." *The Human Condition*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958, p.133.

³¹ See Henck Thomas and Chris Logan, *Mondragon: An Economic Analysis*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1982. See also Douthwaite, *Short Circuit*, p.161ff.

³² André Gorz offers some preliminary thoughts on these issues in *Paths to Paradise*, [1983] trans. Malcolm Imrie, London: Pluto Press, 1985.

³³ In *Nihilism Inc.: Ecological Destruction and the Metaphysics of Sustainability*, Sydney: Eco-Logical Press, 1996, Chs 15 & 16 I have argued for a multi-levelled federated system as the most likely to achieve this result.

³⁴ On this, see David Dickson, *The Politics of Science*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1988.

³⁵ See *Nihilism Inc.*, Chs 13 & 14.