

The Left Today

John Zerzan

Alas, still around to some degree, going through the motions and in some cases finding new ways to repackage the same old shit.

The eternally superficial liberal-left “progressives” are as transparently averse to liberation as are the few surviving leninoids.

The Social Forum, in its “Global” as well as more local forms, is a recent catch-all for leftists, including communists looking for a home in the post-Soviet Union era. At anti-G8 Genoa in 2001, Genoa Social Forum partisans did their best to deliver anarchists to the police and worked hard afterwards to spread lies about the Black Bloc effort in Genoa. At last year’s Global Social Forum in Porto Alegre these statist — or those in charge, anyway — spent their time praising Brazilian president Lula’s leftist regime and having anarchists physically attacked in the streets. Closet “anarchist” Noam Chomsky is one of the main Social Forum leaders.

The “anti-state communists” we still have with us, although they seem to be going nowhere. The term has appeal to some, but is meaningless and contradictory. The anti-state commies have yet to criticize mass production and global trade, because they apparently want to preserve all the techno-essentials of the modern setup. It is impossible to have global production and exchange without government — call it by any name you like — to coordinate and regulate any such mass system.

Michael Albert’s participatory economics (“parecon”) holds that the state function could be replaced by an enormous amount of meeting-hours by everyone, in order to set production and trade quotas, etc. If one’s priority is to run a world just like the one we now endure, I guess such an unappealing blueprint somehow makes sense.

A rather different phenomenon is the (largely European) “insurrectionalist” stance, which seems to be a kind of amorphous hybrid of several contradictory tenets. In order to maximize the unity required to achieve an insurrectionary condition, insurrectionalists find it useful to minimize a potentially non-unifying discussion of specifics. But this approach runs the risk of tending toward suppression of ideas. Meanwhile, insurrectionalist theorist Alfredo Bonanno can espouse national liberation fronts (states-in-waiting), while others in this camp are very lucidly anti-civilization (Bonanno, it should be added, has been prosecuted repeatedly and imprisoned in Italy for his courageous resistance over the years). Maybe insurrectionalism is less an ideology than an undefined tendency, part left and part anti-left but generally anarchist.

What all these left-leaners lack is a willingness to confront the basics of domination with the resolve and pointed questioning required if domination is to be erased.

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