# Theses on Libertarian Municipalism

Murray Bookchin

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Historically, radical social theory and practice have focused on two arenas of human societal activity: the workplace and the community. Beginning with the rise of the Nation-State and with the Industrial Revolution, the economy has acquired a predominant position over the community – not only in capitalist ideology but in the various socialisms, libertarian and authoritarian, that emerged early in the last century. The shift from an ethical emphasis on socialism to an economic one is a problem of far-reaching proportions that has been widely discussed. What is relevant to the immediate issue at hand is that the socialisms themselves early acquired disquieting bourgeois attributes of their own, a development most markedly revealed by the Marxian vision of attaining human emancipation by the domination of nature, a historic project that presumably entailed the "domination of man by man" the Marxian and bourgeois rationale for the emergence of class society as a "pre-condition" for human emancipation.

Unfortunately, the libertarian wing of socialism – the anarchist – did not consistently advance the primacy of ethics over the economistic. Perhaps understandably so, with the rise of the factory system, the *locus classicus* of capitalist exploitation, and the emergence of the industrial proletariat as the "bearer" of a new society. For all its moral fervour, the syndicalist adaptation to industrial society and its image of the libertarian trade union as the infrastructure of a liberated world marked a disturbing shift in emphasis from communitarianism to industrialism, from communal values to factory values.[1] Certain works which acquired an almost doxagraphic sanctity in syndicalism were to heighten the significance of the factory and, more generally, the workplace in radical theory, not to speak of the messianic role of the "Proletariat." The limits of this analysis, too, need not be examined here. Superficially, they seemed to be justified by the events of the First World War era and the 1930s. Today, the situation is otherwise; and the fact that we can criticize them with the sophistication provided by decades of hindsight hardly allows us the right to patronizingly dismiss proletarian socialism for its lack of foresight.

But the point must be made: the factory, and for much of history the workplace, has actually been the primary arena not only of exploitation but of hierarchy – this together with the patriarchal family. It has served not to "discipline," "unite," and "organize" the proletariat for revolutionary change, but to school it in the habits of subordination, obedience, and mindless

[1] For a particularly disturbing example, on has only to read Abad de Santillian's *El Organismo Economico de la Revolucion* (Barcelona, 1936), translated into English under the title *After the Revolution*, a work that exercised immense influence on the CNT-FAI.

drudgery. The proletariat, as do all oppressed sectors of society, comes to life when it sheds its industrial habits in the free and spontaneous activity of *communizing* – the living process that gives meaning to the word "community." Here, workers shed their strictly class nature, their status as the counterpart of the bourgeoisie, and reveal their human nature. The anarchic ideal of decentralized, stateless, collectively managed, and directly democratic communities– of confederated municipalities or "communes" – speaks almost intuitively, and in the best works of Proudhon and Kropotkin, consciously,to the transforming role of libertarian municipalism as the framework of a liberatory society, rooted in the nonhierarchical ethics of a unity of diversity, self-formation and self-management, complementarity, and mutual aid.

The Commune, *qua* municipality or city, must be singled out from its purely functional role as an economic realm, where human beings acquire the opportunity to perform nonagricultural tasks, or as the "imploded center" (to use Lewis Mumford's language) of heightened intercourse and propinquity to illuminate its historic function in transforming the quasi-tribal folk united by blood ties and custom into a body politic of citizens united by ethical values based on reason.

This vast transforming function brought the "stranger" or "outsider" into a common bond with the traditional *genoi* and created a new sphere of interrelationships: the realm of *polissonomos* – literally, the meaning of a *polis* or city. It is from this conjunction of *nomos* and *polis* that the abbreviated word "politics" derives, a term that has been denatured into mere statecraft, just as the word *polis* has been mistranslated as "State." These distinctions are not etymological niceties. They reflect a very real degradation of *concepts*, each of immense importance in itself, to suit ideological ends. Anti-authoritarians are repelled by the degradation of the term "society" into "State," and with good reason. The State, as we know, is a distinct artifact of ruling classes, a professionalized monopoly of violence to assure the subjugation and exploitation of human by human. Anthropology and social theory have shown how it began to slowly emerge from the broader background of hierarchical relationships, its varying forms and degrees of development, its full contours in the modern Nation-State, and possibly its future, most complete forms in the totalitarian State. So, too anti-authoritarians know that the family, workplace, cultural forms of association in the fullest, anthropological sense of the word "cultural," personal inter-relationships, and generally the private sphere of life, are uniquely *social* and intrinsically distinguishable from statist. That the social and the statist can infiltrate each other such that archaic despotisms were examples of the patriarchal *oikos* writ large and the modern totalitarian State's absorption of the social reflects the expanded meaning of the word "bureaucracy" (the psychotherapeutic and educational realms as well as the traditional administrative) are evidence of the impurities that exist in all modes of societal organization.

The emergence of the city opens to us in varying degrees of development not only the new domain of universal *humanitas* as distinguished from the parochial folk, of the free space of an innovative civicism as distinguished from tradition-bound, biocentric *gemeinschaften*; it also opens to us the realm of *polissonomos*, the management of the *polis* by a body politic of free citizens, in short, of *politics* as distinguished from the strictly social and statist. History affords us no "pure" category of the political realm any more than it offers us any image beyond the band and village level of non-hierarchical social relationships – and, until recent times, of pure statist institutions. "Purity" is a word that can be introduced into social theory only at the expense of any contact with reality as we have known it in history. But approximations of a politics, invariably civic in character, do exist that are not primarily social or statist: the Athenian democracy, New England town meetings, the sectional assemblies and Paris Commune of 1793, to cite the most noteworthy

examples. Fairly permanent in some case, ephemeral in others, and admittedly greatly flawed by so many of the oppressive features that marked all the societal relationships of the eras in which they existed, they can nevertheless be collected in their small fragments and large pieces to provide an image of a political realm that is neither parliamentary nor bureaucratic, centralized nor professionalized, social nor statist, but rather civic in its recognition of the city's role of transforming a folk or a monadic agglomeration of individuals into a citizenry based on ethical and rational modes of association.

To define the social, political, and statist in their categorical specificity and to see the city in its historical evolution as the arena within which the political emerges *apart* from the social and the statist is to open areas of investigation whose programmatic importance is enormous. The modern era is defined "civically" by urbanization, a malignant perversion of citification that threatens to engulf both town and country, and render their historic dialectic almost unintelligible in modern eyes. The confusion between urbanization and citification is as obscurantist today as the confusion between society and state, collectivization and nationalization, or, for that matter, politics and parliamentarism. The *urbs* in Roman usage were the physical facts of the city, its buildings, squares, streets, as distinguished from the *civitas*, as the union of citizens or body politic. That the two words were not interchangeable until late imperial times when the very concept of "citizenship" had declined, indeed, to be replaced by caste-oriented names and subjects of the Roman *imperium*, tells us a very poignant and highly relevant fact. The Gracchi had tried to turn the *urbs* into a *civitas*, to recreate the Athenian *ekklesia* at the expense of the Roman Senate. They failed, and the *urbs* devoured the *civitas* in the form of the Empire. Conceivably, the yeoman-citizens who formed the backbone of the Republic could have turned it into a democracy, but once they "came down from the Seven Hills" on which Rome was founded, they became "small," to use Heine's words. The "idea of Rome" as an ethical heritage diminished in direct proportion to the growth of the city, Hence, "The greater Rome grew, the more this idea dilated; the individual lost himself in it: the great men who remain eminent are borne up by this idea, and it makes the littleness of the little men even more pronounced."

There is a lesson, here, to be learned on the perils of hierarchy and "greatness," but also an intuitive sense of the distinction between urbanization and citification, the growth of the *urbs* at the expense of the *civitas*. But still another question arises: is the *civitas* or body politic meaningful unless it is literally, indeed, protoplasmically, *embodied*? Rousseau reminds us that "houses make a town, but [only] citizens make a city." Conceived as merely an "electorate" or a "constituency," or, to use the most degraded word the State has applied to them, "taxpayers" – a term that is virtually a euphemism for a "subject" – the inhabitants of the *urbs* became abstractions and, hence, mere "creatures of the State," to use American juridical language in regard to the legal status of a municipal entity today. A people whose sole "political" function is to vote for delegates is no people at all; it is a "mass," an agglomeration of monads. Politics, as distinguished from the social and statist, involves the re-embodiment of masses into richly articulated assemblies, the formation of a body politic in an arena of discourse, shared rationality, free expression, and radically democratic modes of decision-making.

The process is interactive and self-formative. One may choose to agree with Marx that "men" form themselves as producers of material things; with Fichte, as ethically motivated individuals; with Aristotle, as dwellers in a *polis*; with Bakunin, as seekers of freedom. But in the absence of self-management in all these spheres of life – economic, ethical, political, and libertarian – the character formation which transforms "men" from passive objects into active subjects is painfully

lacking. Selfhood is as much a function of "managing," or, preferably, communizing, as managing is a function of selfhood. Both belong to the formative process the Germans call *Bildung* and the Greeks *paidaia*. The civic arena, whether as *polis*, town, or neighborhood, is literally the cradle for civilizing human beings beyond the socializing process provided by the family. And to put matters bluntly, civic "civilizing" is merely another expression for *politicizing* and rendering a mass into a deliberative, rational, ethical body politic. To achieve this concept of *civitas* presupposes that human beings can assemble as more than isolated monads, discourse directly with modes of expression that go "beyond words," reason in a direct, face-to-face manner, and arrive peacefully at a commonality of views that renders decisions possible and their implementation consistent with democratic principles. In forming and functioning in such assemblies, citizens are also forming themselves, for politics is nothing if it is not educational and if its innovative openness does not promote character formation.

Hence the municipality is not merely a "place" in which one lives, an "investments" into a home, sanitary, health, and security services, a job, library, and cultural amenities. Citification historically formed a sweeping transition of humanity from tribal into civil modes of life that was as revolutionary as the transition from hunting-gathering to food cultivation, and from food cultivation into manufacturing. Despite the absorptive powers of the State, a later development, to meld civicism with nationalism and politics with statecraft, the "Urban Revolution" as V. Gordon Childe was to call it, was no less sweeping than the Agricultural Revolution and the Industrial Revolution. Moreover, like all its predecessors, the Nation-State still contains this past in its belly and has not fully digested it. Urbanization may well complete what the Roman Caesars, the Absolute monarchies, and the bourgeois republics failed to do – obliterate even the heritage of the Urban Revolution – but this has not yet been accomplished.

Before turning to the revolutionary implications of a libertarian municipal approach and the libertarian politics it yields, it is necessary to deal with one more theoretical problem: policy-making as distinguished from mere administration. On this score, Marx, in his analysis of the Paris Commune of 1871, has done radical social theory a considerable disservice. The Commune's combination of delegated policy-making with the execution of police by its own administrators, a feature of the Commune which Marx celebrated, is a major failing of that body. Rousseau quite rightly emphasized that popular power cannot be delegated without being destroyed. One either has a fully empowered power completely tainted the council system (soviets, *Räte*), the Commune of 1871, and, of course, republican systems generally, whether municipal or national. The words "representative democracy" are a contradiction in terms. A people cannot engage in *polissonomos* by placing *nomos*-making, legislation, or *nomothesia* in surrogate bodies that exclude it from the discourse, reasoning, and deciding that fives politics its very identity. No less significantly, it cannot deliver to administration – the mere execution of policy – the power to formulate what must be administered without laying the groundwork for the State.

The supremacy of the assembly as a formulator of policy over that of any administrative agency is the only guarantor, to the extent that one exists, of the supremacy of politics over statecraft. This unblemished degree of supremacy is all the more crucial in a society that is entangled with experts and executors for the operations of its highly specialized social machinery, and the problem of maintaining popular-assembly supremacy is only heightened during any period of transition from an administratively centralized society to a decentralized one. Only if assemblies of the people, from city neighborhoods to small towns, maintain the most demanding vigilance and scrutiny over any coordinating confederal bodies is a libertarian democracy

conceivable. Structurally, this issue poses no problems. Communities have relied on experts and administrators without losing their freedom from time immemorial. The destruction of these communities has usually been a statist act, not an administrative one as such. Priestly corporations and chiefdoms have relied on ideology and, very significantly, on public naivete, not primarily on force, to attenuate popular power and ultimately eliminate it.

The State has never absorbed the totality of life in the past, a fact which Kropotkin implicitly indicated in *Mutual Aid* when he described the richly textured civic life that existed even in oligarchic medieval communes. Indeed, the city has commonly been the principal countervailing force to imperial and National-States from ancient times to the recent present. Augustus and his heirs made the suppression of municipal autonomy a centerpiece of Roman imperial administration as did the Absolute monarchs of the Reformation era. To "tear down the city walls" was a fixed policy of Louis XIII and Richelieu, a policy that was to surface later when the Robespierrist Committee of Public Safety moved ruthlessly to restrict the powers of the Commune in 1793-94. The "Urban Revolution," in effect, has haunted the State as an irrepressible *dual power*, a potential challenge to centralized power throughout much of history. This tension exists to the present day, as witness the conflicts between the centralized State and the municipality in America and England. Here in the most immediate environment of the individual – the community, the neighborhood, the town, or the village – where private life slowly begins to phase into public life, the authentic locus for functioning on a base level exists insofar as urbanization has not totally destroyed it. When urbanization will have effaced city life so completely the city no longer has its own identity, culture, and spaces for consociation, the bases for democracy – in whatever way the word is defined – will have disappeared and the question of revolutionary forms will be a shadow game of abstractions.

By the same token, no radical outlook based on libertarian forms and their possibilities is meaningful in the absence of the radical consciousness that will give these forms content and a sense of direction. Let there be no mistake about the fact that all democratic and libertarian forms can be turned against the achievement of freedom if they are conceived schematically, as abstract ends that lack that ideological meaning. Moreover, it would be naive to believe that forms like neighborhood, town, and popular communal assemblies could rise to the level of a libertarian public life or give rise to a libertarian body politics without a highly conscious, well-organized, and programmatically coherent libertarian movement. It would be equally naive to believe that such a libertarian movement could emerge without that indispensable radical *intelligentsia* whose medium is its own intensely vibrant community life (one is reminded here of the French intelligentsia of the Enlightenment and the tradition it established in the *quartiers* and *cafés* of Paris), not the assortment of anemic *intellectuals* who staff the academies and institutes of western society.[2] Unless anarchists develop this waning stratum of thinkers who live a vital in a searching communication with their social environment, they will be faced with the very real danger of turning ideas into dogmas and becoming the self-righteous surrogates of once-living movements and people who belong to another historical era.

[2] For all its shortcomings and failings, it was this radical intelligentsia that provided the cutting edge of every revolutionary project in history – and, in fact, literally *projected* the very ideas of social change from which the people drew their social insights. Perikles was to exemplify them in the ancient world, a John Ball or a Thomas Munzer in the medieval and Reformation eras, a Denis Diderot during the Enlightenment, an Emile Zola and Jean-Paul Sartre in relatively recent times. The academic *intellectual* is a fairly recent phenomenon: a bookish, cloistered, incestuous and career-oriented creature who lacks life experience and practice.

IT is undeniably true that one can play fast-and-loose with words like "municipality" and "community," "assemblies" and "direct democracy," overlooking the class, ethnic, and gender differences that have made words like "the People" into meaningless, even obscurantistic, abstractions. The sectional assemblies of 1793 were not only forced into conflict with the more bourgeois Paris Commune and the National Convention; they were battlegrounds in their own right between propertied and propertyless strata, royalists and democrats, moderates and radicals. To anchor these strata in exclusively economic interests can be as misleading as to ignore class differences entirely and speak of "fraternity" or "liberty" and "equality" as though these words were often little more than rhetoric. Enough has been written, however, to thoroughly demystify the humanistic slogans of the great "bourgeois" revolutions; indeed, so much has been done to reduce them to mere reflexes of narrow bourgeois self-interest that we now risk the possibility of losing all sight of their populist *utopian* dimension. After so much has been said about the economic conflicts that divided the English, American, and French revolutions, future histories of these great dramas would now serve us best if they revealed the bourgeoisie's' real fear of *all* revolutions, its innate conservatism and proclivity for compromising with the established order. They would also serve us best if they revealed how the oppressed strata of the revolutionary era pushed the "bourgeois" revolutions beyond the narrow confines the bourgeoisie itself established into remarkable areas of democratic principles with which the bourgeoisie has always lived in an uneasy and suspicious accommodation. The various "rights" these revolutions formulated were achieved not because of the bourgeoisie but in spite of it by the American yeoman farmers in the 1770s and the *sans culottes* of the 1790s – and their future becomes increasingly questionable in a growing corporate and cybernetic world.

But this very future and recent trends – technological, societal, and cultural which shake up and threaten to decompose the traditional class structure produced by the Industrial Revolution – raise the prospect that a general interest can emerge out of the particular class interests created by the past two centuries. The word "people" may well return to the radical vocabulary – not as an obscurantist abstraction but as a highly meaningful expression of increasingly rootless, fluid, and technologically displaced strata which can no longer be integrated into a cybernetic and highly mechanized society. To the technologically displaced strata we can add the elderly and the young who face a dubious future in a world that can no longer define the roles people play in its economy and culture. These strata no longer fit elegantly into a simplistic division of class conflicts that radical theory structured around "wage labor" and "capital."

The "people" may return to this era in still another sense: notably as a "general interest" that is formed out of public concern over ecological, community, moral, gender, and cultural issues. It would be unwise to downplay the crucial role of these seemingly marginal "ideological" concerns. As Franz Borkenau emphasized nearly fifty years ago, the history of the past century tells us only too clearly that the proletariat can become more enamored of nationalism than socialism and be guided more by a "patriotic" interest than a "class" interest, as any one who visits the United States today would quickly learn. Quite aside from the historic influence such ideological movements as Christianity and Islam have exercised, both of which *still* reveal the power of ideology to rise above material interest, we are also faced with the power of ideology to work in a socially progressive direction – notably ecological, feminist, ethnic, moral, and countercultural ideologies within which one encounters pacifist and utopistic anarchist components that await integration into a coherent outlook. In any case, new social movements are developing around us which cross traditional class lines. From this ferment, a general interest may yet be formed

which is larger in its scope, novelty, and creativity than the economically oriented particular interests of the past. And it is from this ferment that a "people" can emerge and sort itself out into assemblies and like forms, a "people" that transcends particularistic interests and gives a heightened relevance to a libertarian municipal orientation.

At a time when Orwell's image of 1984 can be clearly translated into the "megalopis" of a highly centralized State and a highly corporatized society, we must explore the possibility of counterposing to these statist and social developments a third realm of human practice: the political realm created by the municipality, a historic development of the Urban Revolution itself that has not been fully digested by the State. Revolution always translates itself into dual power: the industrial union, soviet or council, and the Commune, all oriented against the State. A thorough examination of history will show that the factory, a creature of bourgeois rationalization, has never been the locus of revolution; the most explicitly revolutionary workers (the Spanish, Russian, French, and Italian) have mainly been transitional classes, indeed traditional decomposing agrarian strata which were subject to the discordant and ultimately corrosive impact of an industrial culture that is itself already becoming a traditional one. Today, in fact, where workers are still in motion, their battle is largely defensive (ironically, by a capital-intensive, increasingly cybernetic technology) and reflect the last stirrings or a waning economy.

The city, too, is dying – but in a very different sense from the factory. The factory was never the realm of freedom. It was always the realm of survival, of "necessity," which disempowered and desiccated the human world around it. Its emergence was bitterly resisted by craftspeople, agrarian communities, and a more humanly scaled and communalistic world. Only the naivete of a Marx and Engels, who fostered the myth that the factory serves to "discipline," "unite," and "organize" the proletariat could oblige radicals, mystified in their own right by the ideal of a "scientific socialism," to ignore its authoritarian and hierarchical role. The abolition of the factory by an ecotechnics, creative work, and, yes, by cybernetic devices designed to meet human needs, is a desideratum of socialism in its libertarian and utopian forms, indeed, a moral precondition for freedom.

By contrast, the Urban Revolution played a very different role. It essentially created the idea of a universal *humanitas* and the communalizing of that humanity along rational and ethical lines. It raised the limits to human development imposed by the kinship tie, the parochialism of the folk world, and the suffocating effects of custom. The dissolution of genuine municipalities by urbanization would mark a grave regression for societal life: a destruction of the human dimension of consociation, of the civil life that justifies any use of the word "civilization" and the body politic that gives meaning and identity to the word "politics." Here, if theory and reality enter into conflict with each other, one is justified in invoking Georg Lukacs' famous remark: "So much the worse for the facts." Politics, so easily degraded by "politicians" into statecraft, must be rehabilitated by anarchism in its original meaning as a form of civic participation and administration that stands in counterposition to the State and extends beyond those basic aspects of human intercourse we appropriately call social.[3] In a very radical sense, we must go back to the roots of the word in the *polis* and the unconscious stirrings of the people to create a domain for

[3] Before concluding these remarks, it is worth noting that the distinction between the social and the political has a long pedigree, one which goes back to Aristotle and was to surface continually over the history of social theory, most recently in the works of Hannah Arendt. What both thinkers lacked was a theory of the State, hence the absence of a tripartite distinction in their writings.

rational, ethical, and public intercourse which, in turn, gave rise to the ideal of the Commune and the popular assemblies of the revolutionary era.

Anarchism has always stressed the need for moral regeneration and for a counter-culture (to use this word in its best sense) against the prevailing culture. Hence its emphasis on ethics, its concern for a coherence of means and ends, its defense of human rights as well as civil rights, notably in its concern for oppression in every aspect of life. Its image of counter-*institutions* has been more problematic. It would be well to remember that there has always been a *communalist* tendency in anarchism, not only a syndicalist and an individualist one. Moreover, this communalist tendency has always had a strong municipalist orientation, one which can be gleaned from the writings of Proudhon and Kropotkin. What has been lacking is a searching examination of the political core of this orientation: the distinction between a realm of discourse, decision-making, and institutional development that is neither social nor statist. Civic politics is not intrinsically parliamentary politics; indeed, if we restore the authentic historic meaning of the word "politics" to its rightful place in the radical vocabulary, it is redolent of the Athenian citizens' assembly and its more egalitarian heir, the sectional assemblies of Paris. To reach back into these historic institutions, to enrich their content with our libertarian traditions and critical analyses, and to bring them to the surface of an ideologically confused world is to bring the past to the service of the present in a creative and innovative way. Every radical tendency is burdened by a certain measure of intellectual inertia, the anarchist no less than the socialist. The security of tradition can be so comforting that it ends all possible innovation, even among anti-authoritarians.

Anarchism is beleaguered by its concern over parliamentarism and statism. This concern has been amply justified by history, but it can also lead to a siege mentality that is no less dogmatic in theory than an electoral radicalism is corrupt in practice. Yet if libertarian municipalism is construed as an *organic* politics, a politics that *emerges* from the base level of human consociation into the fullness of a genuine body politic and participatory forms of citizenship, it may well be the last redoubt for a socialism oriented toward decentralized popular institutions. A major feature of a libertarian municipalist approach is what it can evoke lived traditions to legitimate its claims, traditions which, however fragmentary and tattered, still offer the potential for a participatory politics of challenging dimensions to the State. The Commune still lies buried in the city council; the sections still lie buried in the neighborhood; the town meeting still lies buried in the township; confederal forms of municipal association still lie buried in regional networks of towns and cities. To recover a past that can live and be reworked to suit liberatory ends is not to be captive to tradition; it is to ferret out uniquely human goals of association that have abiding qualities in the human spirit – *the need for community as such* – and which have welled up repeatedly over the past. They linger in the present as stillborn hopes which people find within themselves at all times and which come to the surface of history in inspired moments of action and release.

These theses advance the view that a libertarian municipalism is possible and a new civic politics is definable as a dual power that can counterpose assembly and confederal forms to the centralized State. As matters now stand in the Orwellian world of the 1980s, this perspective of dual power may well be one of the most important ones, doubtless among others, that libertarians can hope to develop without compromising their anti-authoritarian principles. Further: These theses advance the view that an organic politics based on such radical participatory forms of civic association does not exclude the right of anarchists to alter city and town charters such that they validate the existence of directly democratic institutions. And if this kind of activity

brings anarchists into city councils, there is no reason why such a politics should be construed as parliamentary, particularly if it is confined to the civic level and is consciously posed against the State.[4] IT is curious that many anarchists who celebrate the existence of a "collectivized" industrial enterprise, here and there, which considerable enthusiasm despite its emergence within a thoroughly bourgeois economic framework can view a municipal politics that entails "elections" of any neighborhood assemblies, recallable deputies, radically democratic forms of accountability, and deeply rooted localist networks.

The city is not congruent with the State. The two have very different origins and have played very different roles historically. That the State penetrates *every* aspect of life today, from the family to the factory, from the union to the city, does not mean that one self-righteously withdraws from every form of organized human interrelationships, indeed from one's own skin, to an empyrean realm of purity and abstraction, one that would validate Adorno's description of anarchism as a "ghost." If there are any ghosts that haunt us, they take the form of a dogmatism and ritualistic rigidity so inflexible that one slips into an intellectual *rigor mortis* no different in kind from that which settles over a corpse frozen in the eternity of death. The power of authority to command the individual physically will have then achieved a conquest more complete than the imperatives produced by mere coercion. It will have laid its hand on the human spirit itself – its freedom to think creatively and resist with ideas, even if its capacity to act is blocked for a time by events.

[4] One would hope that the ghost of Paul Brousse is not invoked against this thesis. Brousse used the libertarian municipalism of the Commune, so deeply ingrained in the Parisian people of his time, against that very communalist tradition – that is, to practice a purely bourgeois form of parliamentarianism, not to bring Paris and French municipalities into opposition to the centralized State, as the Commune of 1793 tried to do. There was nothing organic about his views of municipalism and nothing revolutionary about his intentions. Everyone has used the image of the Commune for different purposes: Marx to anchor his theory of the "proletarian dictatorship" in historic precedent; Lenin to legitimate a totally Jacobin "politics," and anarchists, more critically, for communalism.

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