Chomsky's Anarchism

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With the collapse of state socialism in the east and the increasingly transparent authoritarian nature of western capitalism, perhaps we are entering a period in which the ideals of libertarian socialism and anarchism may be opened to a wider audience. One contemporary thinker who has contributed to and enriched the libertarian tradition is Noam Chomsky. His work in linguistics has caused a major revolution in this field and led to the incorporation of linguistics into the domain of cognitive psychology. His linguistic investigations, combined with his rationalist philosophy, have undermined the previously dominant behaviourist and empiricist concepts of human behaviour and offer the first serious insight into human nature with potentially revolutionary implications for social thought. He has written on a wide range of political issues and played a highly active role in the protests against U.S. aggression in Indochina which earned him repeated stays in prison and a place on Nixon's Black List. His deep concern for human rights has led to his uncompromising critique of U.S. foreign policy and he has refined Bakunin's prescient analysis of a new class of intellectuals and technocrats. He calls this new class the "secular priesthood" and has exposed their role as state managers who serve to mystify and condone actions of the state in order to "engineer consent." His recent analysis of the media's manipulative role has helped clarify the "system of thought control in the west."

The radical nature of Chomsky's political works, so far from the mainstream, have provoked the wrath and sometimes fear of the intellectual establishment who have attempted to marginalise him. He has been distorted, ridiculed or ignored. Hardly any intellectuals are prepared to confront Chomsky in public. In the mid-seventies *The New York Review of Books* stopped publishing his articles and none of his books have been reviewed by major professional journals in the United States. This does not surprise or worry Chomsky, but quite the contrary: "A dissident should begin to worry if he or she gets accepted into the mainstream. They must be doing something wrong, because it just doesn't make sense. Why should institutions be receptive to critique of those institutions."[1]

All his thought, both political and linguistic, is imbued with a rigorous libertarian morality and deep human concern. He has also written specific essays on anarchism and describes himself as a "socialist anarchist." While it is hardly surprising that Chomsky's political thought, despite his intellectual and moral stature, should be ignored by the establishment, there are also anarchists who are either unaware of his political works or who maintain an ambivalent or even

[1] *Radical Philosophy*, 53, Autumn '89, p. 36.

suspicious attitude towards him. Some, for example George Woodcock, deny that Chomsky is an anarchist but rather a left-wing marxist.[2] Let's examine then, Chomsky's anarchism, his relation to Marx and marxism and also the libertarian implications of his linguistic theory and rationalist philosophy.

Chomsky sees anarchism as a development of the ideas of the Enlightenment, stemming especially from Rousseau's "Discourse on Inequality," Wilhelm Von Humboldt's "Limits of State Action" and Kant's assertion that "freedom is the precondition for acquiring the maturity for freedom." He writes that "with the development of industrial capitalism, a new and unanticipated system of injustice, it is libertarian socialism that has preserved the radical humanist message of the Enlightenment and the classical liberal ideals that were perverted into an ideology to sustain the emerging social order."[3] Chomsky is in agreement with the anarcho-syndicalist Rudolph Rocker—perhaps, along with Bakunin, his major political influence—who defined "modern anarchism" as "the confluence of two great currents which during and since the French Revolution have found such characteristic expressionist he intellectual life of Europe: socialism and liberalism."[4] He argues, with Bakunin, that every consistent anarchist must, first, be a socialist by which he means one who opposes the private ownership of the means of production, wage slavery and alienated labour.

He thus sees anarchism as the libertarian wing of socialism and consequently rejects the authoritarian socialists' insistence on the need for the conquest of state power and the control of production by a state bureaucracy. He paraphrases Fourier in calling for the "third and last emancipatory phase of history."..."the first having made serfs out of slaves, the second having made wage earners out of serfs, and the third, which abolishes the proletariat in a final act of liberation that places control over the economy in the hands of free and voluntary associations of producers."[5]

Chomsky's inclusion of Rousseau and Humboldt already differs from the normal catalogue of anarchist or libertarian socialist thinkers, and when considering Bakunin's or Rocker's devastating critiques of Rousseau may at first seem odd. However, he is not alone in incorporating classical liberal doctrines within the anarchist tradition—see the Rocker quote above—and perhaps what really strikes some anarchists as strange or even heretical, is his selection of left-wing marxists such as Rosa Luxemburg, the council communists Anton Pannakoek and Paul Mattick, and Marx himself. This is explained, however, as, despite it being abundantly clear that libertarianism is the basis of his political thought, Chomsky is attempting to build up a broader libertarian socialist tradition whose essence can be found, at least in certain aspects of their thinking, in all the aforementioned figures. His approach to the history of thought is also an important explanatory factor: he approaches it as an "art lover" rather than an "art historian"—to use his own analogy—and looks for insights which have been ignored, neglected or distorted but which have contemporary value or which could not have been properly developed due to the limitations of the historical period in which they evolved. Let's first examine his selection of classical liberal thinkers—Rousseau and Humboldt—then study the political implications of his work on linguistics and finally look at his relation to the marxists.

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[2] "Chomsky's Anarchism," *Freedom* 16, Nov. 1974. (Many anarchists, in turn, deny that Chomsky is an anarchist.)

[3] *For Reasons of State*, Noam Chomsky (Fontana, 1973) p. 156.

[4] *Anarcho-syndicalism*, Rudolph Rocker. (Phoenix Press) p. 16. Also quoted by Chomsky in *For Reasons of State*, p. 157.

[5] *For Reasons of State*, p. 159.

His selection of Humboldt, who was also a celebrated linguist, is perhaps the best illustration of his "art lover's" approach to history and also demonstrates the link between classical liberalism and modern anarchism. Fundamental for Chomsky is Humboldt's conception of human nature which he sees as being self-perfecting, inquiring and creative. Chomsky argues that the basis of Humboldt's social and political thought is his vision "of the end of man" as "…the highest and most harmonious development of his powers to a complete and consistent whole. Freedom is the first and indispensable condition which the possibility of such a development presupposes."[6] This vision, argues Chomsky, is the basis for Humboldt's libertarian views on education and his critique of labour and exploitation where freedom is the essential pre-requisite for meaningful, creative, self-fulfilling work as:

"Whatever does not spring from a man's free choice, or is only the result of instruction and guidance, does not enter into his very being but remains alien to his true nature; he does not perform it with truly human energies, but merely with mechanical exactness."

The same is true of Humboldt's critique of the state which he reduces to that of security. Due to the limitations imposed by the historical circumstances, however—Humboldt was writing in the 1790s—he was unable, according to Chomsky, to foresee several subsequent developments. First were the "dangers of private power" against which "in a predatory capitalist economy, state intervention would be an absolute necessity to preserve human existence and to prevent the physical destruction of the environment—I speak optimistically." Second, the commodity character of labour which demanded social protection and third, the slavery which the wage system under capitalism created. He believes that, given Humboldt's conception of human nature, of man's repellence towards bondage and his critique of alienated labour, he "might have accepted Fourier's third and last emancipatory phase of history," and concludes that Humboldt

"looks forward to a community of free associations without coercion by the state or other authoritarian institutions, in which free men can create and inquire and achieve the highest development of their powers—far ahead of his time he presents an anarchist vision that is appropriate, perhaps, to the next stage of industrial society."[7]

Chomsky's selection of Rousseau is based solely on his "Discourse on Inequality," which he describes as "one of the earliest and most remarkable of the eighteenth century investigations of freedom and servitude…and in many ways a revolutionary tract."[8] Anarchists have traditionally attacked Rousseau as a precursor of Jacobinism or even fascism but this attack is based on his "Social Contract."[9] Chomsky likewise criticizes Rousseau's anti-social individualism and true to his "art-lover's" approach to history, is only attracted to his critique of authoritarian institutions and private wealth which is based on Rousseau's conception of human nature. Like Humboldt, man's faculty of self-perfection of fundamental for Rousseau who sees it as the "specific characteristic

[6] This and subsequent quotes of Humboldt and Chomsky comes from his essay on "Language and Freedom" in *The Chomsky Render* (Ed. James Peck—Pantheon Books, 1987) pages 149 to 154.

[7] Similarly, in his television interview in 1976, printed in *Radical Priorities* (Ed. C.P. Otero; Black Rose Books, 1981) he says that "had (Humbold t) been consistent, (he) would have ended up being a libertarian socialist." p. 248.

[8] *The Chomsky Reader*, p. 141.

[9] For example Bakunin derided Rousseau's "individualist, egoist, base and fraudulent liberty" (*Bakunin on Anarchism*, Ed. by Sam Dolgoff; Black Rose Books, 1980. p. 261) and Rocker saw him as "one of the spiritual fathers of that monstrous idea of an all-ruling, all-incisive political providence which never loses sight of man and mercilessly stamps upon him the march of its superior will" (*Nationalism and Culture*, Rocker Publications Committee, 1978. p. 163).

of the human species" and believes the "essence of human nature" to be "human freedom and the consciousness of this freedom" which is what "distinguish him from the beast-machine."[10]

This concentration on a concept of human nature brings us to a connection between Chomsky's politics and linguistics, albeit a "tenuous" and "hypothetical" one. Chomsky has been greatly influenced by Cartesian rationalism whose concern for a "species characteristic"—that element or characteristic which is specifically human and distinguishes humans from other species—was central. This search for the essence of human nature has important political implications as a conception of human nature underlies every serious social theory. Thus Adam Smith stated that humans were born to "truck and barter," nicely justifying early capitalist society just as Hobbes' anti-social human dominated by fear led to his defence of an all-powerful sovereign/state. Chomsky's conception of human nature is the libertarian socialist one as represented by Rousseau and Humboldt and also Bakunin (that humans have an "instinct of freedom" and "revolt") and Marx, whose theory of alienated labour is, according to Chomsky, "formulated in terms of "species property," that determines certain fundamental human rights: crucially, the right of workers to control production, its nature and conditions."[11]

Basically, Chomsky offers a modernised version of Cartesian rationalist theory which sees knowledge as deriving from the mind, from innateness, in stark contrast to the dominant empiricist belief that knowledge derives from experience. "What we know then, or what we come to believe, depends on the specific experiences that evoke in us some part of the cognitive system that is latent in the mind."[12] He sees human language, or the language faculty, as part of this cognitive system, part of a system of "mental organs" and, consequently, part of human nature. Before Chomsky it had always been thought that human nature was beyond the reach of scientific inquiry but he believes that a science of the mind is, at least in principle, possible and that in studying the properties of language we might have "an entering wedge, or perhaps a model, for an investigation of human nature that would provide the grounding for a much broader theory of human nature."[13]

His and others' investigations of language offer strong grounds for believing that the normal use of language is free and highly creative (in that a child can produce and understand an infinite number of utterances which they have never heard before. This fact is left unexplained by behaviourist and empiricist conceptions of language learning) and, along with the Cartesians, Chomsky believes that this "creative use of language" is unique to humans, essentially uniform across the species and based on biologically determined principles. He believes that "the fundamental human capacity is the capacity and need for creative self-expression, for free control of all aspects of ones life and thought. One particularly crucial realisation of this capacity is the creative use of language as a free instrument of thought and expression."[14] He takes pains to stress that these beliefs are based more on hope and intuition than on scientific grounds but adds that if they are to any extent true, would offer "a biological grounding to the essentially anarchist views that I tend to accept as reasonable."[15] Chomsky, looking towards the future, suggests that "We might in principle" be able to study "other aspects of human psychology and culture in a

[10] *The Chomsky Reader*, p. 145.
[11] *Language and Problems of Knowledge: The Managua Lectures* (MIT Press, 1988) p. 155.
[12] *Reflections on Language* (Fontana, 1979) p. 6.
[13] *The Chomsky Reader*, p. I47.
[14] *Language and Politics* (Ed. C.P. Otero, Black Rose Books, 1988) p. 144.
[15] *Language and Politics*, p. 386.

similar way" and so develop a social science based on empirically well-founded propositions concerning human nature. Just as we study the range of humanly attainable languages, with some success, we might also try to study the forms of artistic expression, or, for that matter, scientific knowledge that humans can conceive, and perhaps even the range of ethical systems and social structures in which humans can live and function, given their intrinsic capacities and needs. Perhaps one might go on to project a concept of social organisation that would—under given conditions of material and spiritual culture—best encourage and accommodate the fundamental human need—if such it is—for spontaneous initiative, creative work, solidarity, pursuit of social justice.[16]

Whilst recognising that this involves a "great intellectual leap" he points to the libertarian socialist tradition whose search for "species characteristics" has made an important contribution and considers it "a fundamental task for libertarian social theory to investigate, deepen and if possible substantiate the ideas developed in this tradition."[17]

These ideas might sound unappealing to some anarchists who have often felt a deep mistrust of science although we could point to Kropotkin who, as a natural scientist, analysed the role of cooperation and mutual aid in evolution. It may also seem outlandish as it involves such a radical departure from the dominant empiricist position that sees the human mind as a *tabula rasa*, a blank sheet with no fixed immutable nature, a product of the environment and which has become embedded in our collective consciousness. A closer look, however, shows it to be entirely reasonable. Until Chomsky, everything in the physical world had been studied in the manner of natural sciences; everything that is except for humans above the neck. Chomsky simply proposes that the human mind /brain should be no exception and that it should be considered as yet one other bodily organ—"the mental organ." He suggests that just as an arm grows in accordance to some initial genetic information into an arm and not awing, so the language faculty -and by extension the other mental organs—will grow to a mature state based on its predetermined, innate and embryonic genetic structure. He does not deny a role to the environment, but this role is relegated to a nutritive rather than a determining one.

Perhaps it might also appear reactionary as much of marxism has been influenced by empiricism and denies the existence of a fixed human essence seeing human nature as a product of historically determined social relations and because empiricism—at least classical British empiricism—grew in response and in opposition to the reactionary determinist doctrines which justified the oppression of women and wage slavery on grounds of immutable human properties. Chomsky believes, however, that not only was the progressive nature of empiricism dubious then[18] but that it certainly lacks this element today and in fact opens the way to "shaping of

[16] *The Chomsky Reader*, p. 155.

[17] *Reflections on Language*, p. 134.

[18] Chomsky believes it could also be argued that there was a relation between empiricism and racism: "Empiricism rose to ascendancy in association with the doctrine of "possessive individualism" that was integral to early capitalism, in an age of empire, with the concomitant growth (one might also say "creation") of racist ideology" and quotes Henry Bracken's reasoning "Racism is easily and readily stateable if one thinks of the person in accordance with empiricist teaching because the essence of the person may be deemed to be his colour, language, religion etc., while the Cartesian dualist model provided …. a modest conceptual brake to the articulation of racial degradation and slavery." (*Reflections on Language*, p. 130). The reason for this "modest conceptual brake" says Chomsky "is simple. Cartesian doctrine characterises humans as thinking beings: they are metaphysically distinct from non-humans, possessing a thinking substance (res cognitans) which is unitary and invariant—it does not have colour for example.." (Language and Responsibility, p. 93.

behaviour" and "manipulation." The rationalists "concern for intrinsic human nature" in contrast "poses moral barriers in the way of manipulation and control particularly if this nature conforms to …libertarian conceptions."[19] Chomsky believes that rationalist approaches are not only the correct ones but also more optimistic and progressive and outlines "a line of development in traditional rationalism that goes from Descartes through the more libertarian Rousseau…through some of the Kantians like Humboldt, for example, all through the nineteenth century libertarians, which holds that essential feature of human nature involve a kind of creative urge, a need to control one's own productive, creative labour, to be free from authoritarian intrusions, a kind of instinct for liberty and creativity, a real human need to be able to work productively under conditions of one's own choosing and determination in voluntary association with others. One strain of thinking held that that is essentially the human nature. If so, then slavery, wage-slavery, domination, authoritarianism and so on are evils, which violate essential human principles, which are injurious to the essential human nature, and therefore intolerable."[20]

Chomsky's rationalism has prompted fierce criticism from both the right and the left and in response he asks why empiricism has dominated western philosophy for so long given the lack of any compelling evidence to support it. Analysing the role of the "technocratic intelligentsia" in modern society which is that of "ideological and social managers" he finds it easy to see its appeal to both the elitish revolutionary left and the liberal technocrats instate capitalist societies:

If people are, in fact, malleable and plastic beings with no essential psychological nature…empiricist doctrine can easily be moulded into an ideology for the vanguard party that claims authority to lead the masses to a society that will be governed by the "red bureaucracy" of which Bakunin warned. And just as easily for the liberal technocrats or corporate managers who monopolize "vital decision-making" in the institutions of state capitalist democracy, beating the people with the people's stick, in Bakunin's trenchant phrase.[21]

The reaction of anarchists and libertarian socialists to Chomsky's rationalism and conception of human nature and the human mind has either been sceptical or non-existent as anarchists have generally been committed to the dominant empiricist philosophy. One recent anarchist overview of "human nature and anarchism" does take a tentative step towards Chomsky's rationalism but stops half way between empiricism and rationalism adopting a "soft determinist" position.[22] It remains to be seen whether Chomsky will be successful in his attempt to persuade anarchists that they have a vested interest in rationalist philosophy.

Let's now look at Chomsky's relation to Marx and marxism. In his writings Chomsky often mentions Marx and approvingly quotes aspects of the thought of left-wing marxists such as Rosa Luxemburg and Anton Pannakoek. Bakunin also accepted a lot of Marx's thought, especially his analysis of capitalism—he even translated some of "Das Kapital" into Russian—but none would describe Bakunin as a marxist. Similarly, it is quite clear that anarchism is the basis of Chomsky's thought although his anarchism is above all a socialist anarchism and his main influences are Bakunin, Rocker and anarcho-syndicalism especially that put into practise in the Spanish Revolution. What Chomsky does is to take what he considers to be of value from the marxist tradition and which he feels coincides with his own libertarian socialist ideals. He considers such concepts

[19] *Language and Problems of Knowledge*, p. 166.

[20] *Language and Politics*, p. 59.

[21] *Reflections on Language*, p. 132.

[22] "Human Nature and Anarchism," Peter Marshall, in *For Anarchism: History Theory and Practice*, D. Goodway (ed), 1989, chapter 4.

as "Marxist" or "Freudian" to be absurd and that "we should not be worshipping at shrines, but learning what we can from people who had something serious to say…while trying to overcome the inevitable errors and flaws."[23] Following from this he doesn't accept everything that all anarchist thinkers say or do (for example Bakunin's empiricism which he considers "quite mindless") and never mentions Stirner (as far as I know) and rarely mentioned Kropotkin who he believes represents an anarchist tradition that is more relevant to preindustrial rural societies.[24] The anarchist tradition to which Chomsky adheres is that which "develops into anarcho-syndicalism which simply regarded anarchist ideas as the proper mode of organisation for a highly complex advanced industrial society. And that tendency merges, or at least inter-relates very closely with a variety of left-wing marxism, the kind one finds in, let's say, the council communists that grew up in the Luxemburgian tradition, and that is later represented by marxist theorists like Anton Pannakoek."[25]

He sees Marx as essentially a theoretician of capitalism whose analysis offers us a deep understanding into its nature and development, as did Bakunin and other anarchists. He considers the essence of Marx's thought to be his critique of alienated labour, the stultifying specialisation of labour and the wage slavery that capitalism presupposes. He is also attracted, as we have seen, to Marx's emphasis in his early manuscripts on a "species character" but rejects the later tendency of Marx, which other marxists have stressed, to embrace empiricist doctrine. He sees little of value in Marx's belief that society develops in accordance to alleged historical laws and feels he "had little to say about socialism" siding with the anarchists who felt that the marxists "misunderstood the prospects for development of a freer society, or worse, that they would undermine these prospects in their own class interest as state managers and ideologists."[26] He strongly objects to the idea of a vanguard party which aims to appropriate the means of production in the name of the workers and advocates the anarchists view that this appropriation must be direct. It is this non-elitist concept of revolution that puts Chomsky firmly in the anarchist camp and separates him from Marx and marxists, especially the tendencies associated with Bolshevism which he considers highly authoritarian and reactionary.

What attracts him to the council communists and Rosa Luxemburg is their critique of Leninist elitism and their view of revolution as a popular cultural transformation rather than an elitish political one. For example, he approvingly quotes Rosa Luxemburg's view that a "true social revolution" requires a "spiritual transformation in the masses degraded by centuries of bourgeois class rule" and that "it is only by extirpating the habits of obedience and servility to the last root that the working class can acquire the understanding of a new form of discipline, self-discipline arising from free consent." Similarly, her judgement of 1904 that Leninist organisation would "enslave a young labour movement to an intellectual elite hungry for power… and turn it into an automaton manipulated by a central committee."[27] As for the council communists, he cites Paul Mattick's criticism of the Bolsheviks' relegation of the needs of the proletariat to those of the Bolshevik party-state and Anton Pannakoek's echo of the anarchists' demand that the appropriation of capital must be direct: "the goal of the working class is liberation from exploitation. This goal is

[23] *The Chomsky Reader*, p. 30.

[24] This does not mean Chomsky finds little of value in Kropotkin. He believes that Kropotkin's analysis of "mutual aid as a factor in evolution" was "perhaps the first major contribution to sociobiology" (*The Chomsky Reader*, p. 21).

[25] *Radical Priorities*, p. 248.

[26] *The Chomsky Reader*, p. 20–21.

[27] *Objectivity and Liberal Scholarship*, reprinted in *The Chomsky Reader*, p. 84.

not reached and cannot be reached by a new directing and governing class substituting itself for the bourgeoisie. It is only realised by the workers themselves being masters over production."[28] Chomsky is especially attracted to the council communists' ideas on workers' councils which he sees as providing a rational and effective system of decision-making in a complex industrial society. He sees them as functioning on an anarchist basis with the assemblies of workers and their direct representatives making the decisions, the latter being accountable to the assembly and working on the shop floor in order to avoid the creation of a separate bureaucracy.[29]

Chomsky's quotes are highly selective and it would be easy to select other quotes from Rosa Luxemburg and the council communists which offer a less libertarian slant. We could even select libertarian utterances from Trotsky, for example his belief in 1904 that "Lenin's methods lead to this: the party organisation (the caucus) first substitutes itself for the party as a whole; then the central committee substitutes itself for the organisation; and finally a single 'dictator' substitutes himself for the central committee."[30] We could similarly point to Lenin's "State and Revolution," a basically libertarian work though arguably opportunistic as it contradicted his previously authoritarian ideas and was written just before the Russian revolution when libertarian ideas were widely accepted. It is the tension within marxism between an elitist, authoritarian model of the revolutionary movement and a non-elitish, voluntary one which governs Chomsky's selections. He is essentially repelled by Lenin and Trotsky as the dominant strain within their thought is, despite occasional flirtations with a more libertarian approach, the elitist model and he is attracted to Rosa Luxemburg and the council communists as it is the non-elitist model that dominates. Chomsky's reading of Marx and marxists clearly follows his "art lovers" approach which enables him to borrow those elements of the marxist tradition which are of value and reject those which violate the fundamental principles of anarchism.

It would thus seem difficult to place Chomsky within the ranks of marxism rather than those of anarchism. It is clear that he is not especially attracted to individualist anarchism but his antagonism to Marx's socialism (as opposed to his critique of capitalism) and especially towards the Leninist variation of marxism is also equally apparent. However we choose to define his political position the libertarian essence of his thought seems indisputable. C.P. Otero sees Chomsky as the new Rousseau in that, while Rousseau's ideas paved the way for the general cultural transformation that preceded and provoked the French Revolution and political democracy, so Chomsky has provided the necessary concepts to stimulate a new cultural transformation and economic democracy. His ideas will enable us to see ourselves in a new light and will help us to see the fundamentally inhuman nature of wage slavery whose elimination will bring us to Fourier's third

[28] For Reasons of State, p. 155 and 161.

[29] See "The Relevance of Anarcho-Syndicalism" in *Radical Priorities*, p. 245–261.

[30] Quoted in *Rosa Luxemburg Speaks*, p. 23 (Pathfinder Press, 1970). Chomsky's antagonism to Trotsky is quite clear: "Trotskyism…in part…involved a recognition of very ugly things that were happening in the Soviet Union" "but who was Trotsky? Trotsky was Lenin's associate. Whatever he may have said during periods when he didn't have power, either prior to the revolution or after he was kicked out, when it was easy to be a libertarian critic, it was when he did have power that the real Trotsky emerged. That Trotsky was the one who laboured to destroy and undermine the popular organisations of workers in the Soviet Union, the factory councils and soviets, who wanted to subordinate the working class to the will of the maximum leader and to institute a program of militarisation of labour in the totalitarian society that he and Lenin were constructing. That was the real Trotsky—not only the one who sent his troops to Kronstadt and wiped out Makhno's peasant forces once they were no longer needed to fend off the Whites, but the Trotsky who, from the very first moment of access to power, moved to undermine popular organisations and to institute highly coercive structures in which he and his associates would have absolute authority." (*The Chomsky Reader*, p. 40 /41).

emancipatory phase of history.[31] While we might not go so far, it cannot be denied that Chomsky is a major intellectual figure and his critique of empiricism and behaviourism has dealt a severe blow to the intellectual foundations of the ruling elitist ideologies. He has provided the basis for a deeper understanding of human nature, and if his intuitions can be substantiated, would offer solid grounding and support for libertarian social theory. His analysis of the state and corporate power and the intellectuals and media who serve their interests have given us a deeper insight into social reality and his rationalism has accurately put his essentially Bakunian social theory on a higher plane. Finally, he has injected modern anarchism and anarcho syndicalism with some badly lacking intellectual content and has persuasively argued for its contemporary relevance, seeing it as the most rational and effective mode of organization for advanced industrial societies. Given such a contribution and the relative poverty of contemporary anarchist thought, the anarchist movement could learn from Chomsky and should welcome him into its ranks.

Similarly, in *Language and Responsibility*, p. 90, he says: "Walter Kendal, for example, has pointed out that Lenin, in such pamphlets as "What is to be Done?" conceived the proletariat as a tabula rasa upon which the "radical" intelligentsia must imprint a socialist consciousness. The metaphor is a good one. For the Bolsheviks, the radical intelligentsia must imprint a socialist consciousness to the masses form the outside; as party members, the intelligentsia must organise and control society in order to bring "socialist structures" into existence." It's perhaps relevant to note here that whilst Chomsky says the "marxist tradition has held that humans (in their intellectual social and general cultural life) are products of history and society, not determined by their biological nature" he believes that "this standard view makes nonsense of the essentials of Marx's own thought "in the sense that, as we have seen, he talked in terms of" species property" in this early work. (*Language and Problems of Knowledge*, p. 162).

[31] In his introduction to *Language and Politics*. C.P. Otero has edited both *Radical Priorities* and *Language and Politics* and has played a fundamental role in propagating Chomsky's thought. He is also about to publish *Chomsky's Revolution: Cognitivism and Anarchism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell).

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