

population & migration

anarchist analyses of privilege
in a time of climate chaos



Dysophia 2 Oct 2010

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The “spending review” is here, with the language of cuts, recession and deficits ringing out across Europe. In the UK, the anti-migration hysteria which increased steadily before the General Election continues to be perpetuated by the Con-Dem coalition and the far right wears a variety of new faces in the form of the English Defence League, the English Nationalist Alliance and more. Austerity politics and ‘sustainability’ are now being used to promote nationalist responses to the straining economic and ecological situations.



This edition of Dysophia looks at the current political situation in the UK and seeks to show the interconnected nature of the struggles against capital and nation states and, through this, develop an analysis of symptoms such as climate change and calls for control on migration and population. The articles included in this pamphlet are intended to provoke discussion and provide context for some of the arguments often heard today.

Migration, population and climate justice are highly emotional topics already the subject of much detailed writing, with many good texts. However, less is written using a particularly anarchist analysis of how

they link-up. Thus, we do not go into exhaustive detail on these issues but to demonstrate a) how they are all inter-connected; and b) how an anti-authoritarian critique of the underlying issues and prevailing attitudes can help build communities of resistance and solidarity. We hope that as well as filling this gap, this pamphlet will be a starting point for various debates that still need to be had.

We hope that the range of topic and treatment of issues will provide materials to satisfy every reader, whether those new to anarchism or those well versed in the standard texts. Half the articles appear for their first time in this publication; the rest are a selection of texts which we felt were valuable

contributions to the debate or demonstrated the solidarity and awareness we are calling for in action. We would have liked to have included material from *No One Is Illegal* on migration and *The Corner House* on population and climate change. Unfortunately, we have been constrained by space, but we urge anyone who wishes to explore these issues further to start with them (see resources). We have not included discussion of primitivist arguments in relation to population as critiques of that strand of green anarchist thought have been well covered elsewhere.

The relationship between all the overlapping circles which we highlight here can be problematic and tense at times. The aim of Dysophia is to provide an introduction to concepts connected to 'green anarchism' and provide a space for a variety of viewpoints. With this in mind, we welcome a contribution from Tomas exploring the arguments around the controversial 'Third Ethic' of permaculture, which in some forms is defined as a limit to population and consumption as a form of sustainability. This has a special relevance today with the current attack on the "Welfare State" and the Government's particular emphasis on restricting support to large families and migrants.

The inclusion of the text of a 1890s trade union leaflet arguing against a call for controls on Jewish migrants demonstrates how old these issues really are.

Finally, many thanks to Alice, Cath, Jed, Matt, Patrick and Sophie for their comments, proofing and advice when we putting this together. Any remaining faults remain ours.

For the cover and internal line drawings we are very grateful to Peter Willis – see more of his work at www.deadtreesanddye.com. If you wish to use some of them for your own work, email him at deadtreesanddye@hotmail.com

We always welcome suggestions, feedback and criticism; you can email Dysophia on dysophia@riseup.net or visit our blog at dysophia.wordpress.com

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Overlapping Circles

dónal o'driscoll

In this article I explore the various links between capitalism, nationalism, population, migration and climate justice and show how anarchism can provide a coherent critique and response to these issues.

Introduction

There is little doubt that one of the biggest political debates across the post-industrial¹ world and beyond is that of migration. Whether it is the whipping up of hysteria in the UK about being 'invaded', France's deportation of the Roma or the SB1070 law in Arizona effectively legalising racial profiling of 'illegals', it is an issue that the politicians are not willing to let go. There is also no shortage of evidence that capitalism is a major driver in forcing migration and, increasingly, climate change.

Worryingly, the mantles of Malthus² and the eugenicists³ are now being worn by the UN Population Fund and the Optimum Population Trust, who are successfully aligning themselves with the social democratic project of the 'steady state economists'⁴ – the only wing of liberal politics producing any sort of radical critique of capitalism. Antipathy to the idea of an ever-growing

¹ By post-industrial I mean those countries traditionally called the "West", North America, Western Europe, Japan, Australia, who have strong liberal and open market traditions but have also managed to export most of their resource exploitation and a significant proportion of their manufacturing to the rest of the world. Liberal is used in the sense of having market-based economies and parliamentary democracy.

² Rev. Thomas Robert Malthus (1766-1834), author on theories of population and in particular the need for its control.

³ Eugenics: a movement popular around the turn of the 20th Century which advocated intervening directly to maintain the "purity" and capabilities of a population, in particular by the active removal of the "degenerate" & "unfit".

⁴ A project which tries to solve the ills of capitalism by removing growth as a central tenant, and incorporating other measures of success instead, such as well-being.

population which demands greater access to the resources currently in the control of wealthy elites has long been a fear within environmental commentary and politics. However, as green politics gains wider traction in the public consciousness and among political theorists, the threat of over-population is increasingly regurgitated as a given truth.

The combined fears of over-population and immigration are used to strike a powerful emotional chord in the people of privileged nations. These fears are not a new phenomenon and, while the horrors of the multiple genocides of WWII may dominate our psyche, the demonisation of minority groups, ethnic or otherwise, has a longer pedigree of use by controlling interests to maintain authority. Regardless of the different reasons put forward in justification, whether religious or pseudo-scientific, when dissected they always boil down to the inter-related motivations of economic and social control.

Leaders distract a populace by blaming others for the problems facing those in power. In extreme cases this can be worked up into an ideology (like fascism), but it does not need to go that far to be an effective tool. It is no coincidence that as the post-industrial nations struggle with the current financial crisis we hear increasing calls for tighter migration controls and deportations.

The subtext of these calls is that if we did not have migrants then everyone would have jobs, or that the welfare system would be in better shape, or whatever... the point is to not accuse the system that created the social inequalities, but those most marginalised by it. People, not capitalism, become the problem and blame for capital's crises no longer focuses on the financiers and politicians who benefit most from the inequalities in social relations.

Capitalism, Nationalism and Borders

Working on similar lines is the insidious relationship between capitalism and nationalism. Anarchists are accustomed to challenging both, but often fail to make the connection between the two explicit. For all that capitalists decry the regulations imposed by nation states, it is the power given to regulations which allow them to monopolize wealth creation through, for example, control of information via patents and copyright.

Capitalism also uses the nation state to exploit populations. It provides the 'legitimised' force that ensures opposition is met by coercive measures (e.g. violent suppression of workers movements). Through laws it justifies the

appropriation of resources by private capital and systems of private property - an issue which similarly concerned Malthus and his followers⁵. Too many people in a given area implies increased pressure for property to be divided up, which the capitalist classes are always concerned to prevent.

The nation state provides two other features that capitalism can manipulate for its own ends. Firstly, it provides the basis for reactionary ideologies which justify a 'them and us' politic. This allows class divisions to be re-drawn along race or 'foreigner' lines, dividing those who have common interests by introducing an element of fear or resentment. This is not just the preserve of right-wing groups, but has come into mainstream politics of all stripes. As the text of the 1890s leaflet included in this collection shows, it was an issue in the politics of the early socialist movement.

The second feature is borders and border controls. Borders are an economic as well as a political tool that favour capitalism by reinforcing divisions and allowing a point of control over individuals. Borders, throughout history have been used to maintain the privileges of those inside over those seeking to come in. They have been used for the purposes of defining citizens' rights, tax collection or protectionist policies on behalf of local traders and craftsmen. Thus a passport becomes a tool of privilege reinforcing these divisions every time it is used, an acknowledgement of the state's power.

Meanwhile the fear of terrorism justifies the accelerating use of technology to control of citizens and non-citizens alike. Companies do not just profit financially from these developments, but gain considerable power. At the same time the right of the state to wield such extensive powers is normalized. Thus, what happens at a country's borders is often a forerunner of oppression the internal populace can expect to face - control of 'outsiders' bringing an 'external threat' is an important component for governments wishing to bring in reforms of society that allow for more autocratic control of society by elites, in particular through bureaucracies. This reason alone should be enough for anarchists and anti-fascists to challenge the politics of borders.

When groups fail to recognise that borders play this role, the result is that their own, otherwise progressive, politics lose international solidarity as they fear for their own privileges. This is as true of anarchist groups as of liberal/socialist ones. Ultimately borders are artificial creations of the nation state, something

⁵ See, for example, the articles on population published by The Corner House.

anarchists should be whole-heartedly challenging. As one participant in a workshop on Freedom of Movement at Cochabamba said:

“The borders that divide us exist primarily in the collective imagination, but they rupture our ability to imagine ourselves as a collective”.

Our analysis, however, must not be simplistic. In the face of the aggressive demands from the north those in the Global South see borders as a way of protecting their natural resources from corporations; thus, we must be careful to nuance our arguments to deal with the practical demands of the moment.

A new other: the ‘climate refugee’

There are many reasons why people migrate – the majority of which is within a nation's borders and then to neighbouring states. The cause is mostly for political or economic reasons, but there is no doubt that climate chaos is increasing numbers. A category of ‘climate refugee’ is being put forwards to define and measure this, resulting in a partial debate on how to deal with this ‘problem’. However, it is argued that this categorisation is troublesome for several reasons:

- 1) Focusing on the reason for migration distracts from the point that people should be able to migrate regardless. No natural law exists that people should remain fixed to one place. That is the road to justifying border controls and thus governments.
- 2) It makes for a segregationist attitude, where people can be divided up and those in the category of ‘refugee’ have their decision-making powers and voices curtailed (‘deny them agency’).
- 3) Furthermore, given the fears generated around climate change it is another way to scaremonger around the issue of migration – the subtext being that all those displaced by climate change will want to come to the UK *en masse*.

All the same existing populations will usually try to protect their access to resources and the lifestyle privilege they derive from them. Why would people want to voluntarily share with others that have come from elsewhere? It is a problem and a fear that needs to be actively addressed, if just to avoid handing it to the Right on a plate. A practical approach will work here, something on which radical circles have much more work to do. If millions do actually arrive, then having a plan to minimise the suffering and trauma on

both sides is important if we are to avoid ever greater repression.

One effect of categorization in this sort of context is to de-humanize by placing migrants in a category of beings who come from 'elsewhere', with whom we have apparently little in common with. This allows dealing with privilege to be avoided; elites and capitalists can ignore their responsibility, while those on the left focus on the symptoms by setting up refugee camps and calls for more aid along the lines of 'making poverty history'. The distance created by the 'them and us' narrative going on here means that fundamental behaviours or attitudes do get challenged.

Nevertheless, there are those being displaced by climate change who themselves call for recognition of 'climate refugees' by other nations and supra-national bodies. This is part of an attempt to apply political pressure from the fact of historical responsibility for emissions, to demand a reversal of repressive immigration policies. We have to be aware of this demand coming from those being forced to migrate and not deny them their agency. What we can do is to recognize the role and obligations that living in the privileged society of the post-industrial world places upon us.

From fear to institutionalised racism

The arguments used by those making calls for both population and migration controls are based on the same fundamental fear – that there are too many people. This is whether it is foreigners coming into 'our' countries, or 'over-breeding' by the disadvantaged classes who live there. In both cases it serves to justify abusive behaviour of elites towards the masses.

An example is enforced sterilisation to keep people in the 'Third World' from over-populating. Neo-liberal economists have justified this on the grounds of ending poverty traps and turning countries into productive subjects of corporate policies.⁶ The result is that people's lives and families are reduced to abstract statistics and the role of corporations in propping up corrupt and oppressive governments brushed over.

For all that it is often dressed up in the language of aid and development, it is clear that there is an inherent racism once one looks at the countries singled

⁶ *"Peoplequake: mass migration, ageing nations and the coming population crash"*, Fred Pearce, 2010. A useful reference for many issues around population control.

out for having an 'over-population' problem – it is rarely over-consuming post-industrial lands for a start. The effects of resource exploitation on local populations and livelihoods are not mentioned by those pushing this agenda, rather countries are 'under-developed', poverty needs to be 'eradicated', a good citizen is a 'productive' one, and so on.

Then there is the fear that there 'is not enough room' in 'our' country, again very much tinged with racism. Thus the migrant worker becomes a thief of jobs and welfare, stealing from our pockets. Using this they are denied rights with the subtext again that they are somehow inferior. It is easier to mistreat people and deny them the rights that ordinary citizens of the nation are accorded if they have first been demonised. For example, ethnicity is often singled out by the media as part of their criticisms, playing on institutionalised racism. The result is to keep migrants in a state of fear and the indigenous working classes blaming them rather than the bosses or the mis-management by political and financial elites of the country's resources for their own gain.

This is not to deny that there is a question mark over how many the United Kingdom can sustain. Denying it as an issue will not make it go away or stop others playing on it. The challenge to confronting the many inconsistencies in the arguments being put forward remains. It is more than saying 'get rid of greedy elites'; there is a need to show how such an inclusive world would work in practice in a way which also tackles concepts such as self-sufficiency.

Migrants are among the groups who suffer the greatest precarity in their jobs and some of the worst exploitation. Fear of deportation is a powerful tool of control and dehumanisation by the state; it also pushes migrants further into the hands of bosses ready to exploit them as cheap labour working in dangerous and unhealthy conditions.

There are various examples of migrants organising themselves politically, for example, the '*sans papiers*' strike in Paris and the mobilisation of London Underground cleaners. Given the precariousness of their situation, such organisation clearly comes at a great risk. When such organisation does happen, it is an important opportunity for demonstrating solidarity.

Regardless of whether the economics or the racism came first, both are now so intertwined in the politics of the post-industrial world that they must be dealt with together.

Using anarchism to face the challenge of privilege

Anarchists can bring a politic to that exposes the problems ignored by other commentators. By analysing relationships of power within the system, we can show how it is our own privilege (and the fear of losing it) that opens the door to racism and reactionary politics, which in turn let government and business off the hook.

The same analysis can be applied to the issue of climate chaos and its potential for truly massive displacement of populations. Too often the liberal agenda presents seductive and distracting arguments (for instance, green capitalism / technologies, genetic modification) which trip up those arguing for fairer, more radical solutions.

The liberal system is blind to its own faults, believes that it knows best for the people of the world and ends up taking a patronising attitude to the non-industrialised world, rather than accepting and addressing its own flaws. Aid cannot provide proper solutions when it comes with political strings attached, or fails to address systemic problems rooted in neo-colonialism. Liberalism created and maintains the capitalism that is driving climate change, resource theft and social inequality; there is only scope for tinkering around the edges. As Einstein said: *“the thinking that got us into this mess is not the same thinking that will get us out”*.

It is amazing how often people express surprise when liberal policy makers and commentators come up with solutions that are inherently focused around the market place. More disturbing is the frequency of the comment, including from those within the radical ecological and non-hierarchical movements, that in the face of climate change, an authoritarian response may be necessary.

The rising discourses around ‘climate migrants’ and ‘over-population’ offer spaces for green anarchists to renew their analysis in the public sphere. Our approach provides a way to show solidarity with those oppressed by capitalism while simultaneously challenging the root causes of climate change, both at home and abroad. However, it also means we must examine our own privilege in line with the basic principles of freedom and equality, mutual aid and solidarity in order to avoid perpetuating institutional racism.

A key strength of anarchist thought is that it is as concerned about the role of the individual as it is about the strength of the community. Central to freedom and equality is that each human must have the ability to reach their full

potential; this is not possible while they are experiencing oppression. Thus anarchists act in solidarity with those who do not necessarily share their politics. Class struggle stands alongside the struggles for equality of gender, ability, race and sexuality. This encompassing resistance to all forms of oppression is why anarchists can participate in struggles of national liberation against imperial and cultural oppression, while at the same time holding a critique of nationalism *per se* as a divisive tool of elites and capital.

While anarchists can be proud of their challenges to all forms of oppression, we, white western activists, should acknowledge that we remain in a position of privilege. This privilege poses a burden of responsibility: awareness of it is insufficient, it also requires action. As pointed out by anti-racist activists, it takes more than using the right words to be truly anti-racist, especially where discrimination is also institutionalised throughout society. To see everyone as equals, to wish everyone the political and cultural freedoms, is only possible when everyone is actually able to share the same life chances.

When applied to the issues of immigration and population in general, not just in the face of climate chaos, there is a requirement to extend the principles of anarchism to all humans. It is clear that most arguments justifying limits to immigration and population will fall in the face of this hurdle. The origins of climate change with the post-industrial society adds an extra layer to the requirement for putting international solidarity into action by those privileged enough to benefit from living in that same society.

While there are strong arguments to place capitalism at the centre of current problems, the principles we have as anarchists are not simply a reaction to capitalism but go to the heart of our politics and can be applied across numerous situations. This analysis lies at the heart of recent pamphlets such as "*Why Climate Change is not an Environmental Issue*" and "*Dealing with Distractions*", both produced by the anarchist milieu for the COP15 summit mobilisations, and "*Space for Movement, reflections from Bolivia on climate justice, social movement and the state*" by the Building Bridges Collective.⁷

⁷ See notenvironmental.blogspot.com, dealingwithdistractions.wordpress.com and spaceformovement.wordpress.com respectively.

Confronting the current paradigm

Obviously, the difficult issues will not disappear simply because we have theoretical answers for them. Our society is institutionally racist and this needs challenging by those of us who live in it. Whether it is climate or economic justice, or other perspectives, migration and population are the terrains where this challenge becomes obvious; by demonstrating solidarity, we (and I write here as a white activist of European origin for those of a similar background) can confront this racism and draw it into the public eye.

While the theories of (neo)-Malthusianism and Social Darwinism (aka 'survival of the fittest' & eugenics) have been utilised by the capitalist classes for their own end, both have sufficient momentum to stand alone. As such they need to be confronted head on, not just in the sphere of class relationships to capital and political elites, but on their own flaws. Their ultimately hierarchical and pessimistic viewpoint of humans is in direct contradiction to anarchism.

The elites of politicians and media are creating a fear of people; migration and 'over-population' are integral to this discourse. Fear is a political tool, so, to not confronting these issues only further embeds the fragmenting of society through fear, and strengthens the ideological control by those at the top are able to exert. It weakens the very solidarity anarchists constantly call for.

In confronting these positions there is also an opportunity to create a wider framework for discussion. We can avoid falling into the 'post-political' world of the liberal system where arguments end up taking place within the framework set out by the government and NGOs. Instead, there is scope for anarchists to fight on our own ground. Now is not a time to be shy about what we believe in.



The remainder of the article explores in more depth three sets of issues: population, migration & capitalism, and then privilege & scarcity, using the lens of anarchism.

Population

History

From the start the debate around population was a class issue. It effectively entered mainstream thought through the writings of Thomas Malthus in the late 18th century. Malthus complained of 'over-population' in British cities and advocated action to halt it.⁸ The focus of his attacks was the poverty-stricken classes who he deemed a threat to society.

Subsequently, Francis Walton and others combined it with Darwin's theory of 'survival of the fittest', using the latter to justify the creation of the eugenics movement at the end of the 19th Century. This maintained the attack on the 'undeserving poor', as well as the disabled.

Feeding into this milieu of elitist thought was the increasing use of nationalism and racism as a political and economic tool. Drawing on the anti-Semitism and the anti-Irish politics of the time, it widened to take in other groups who were to be denied power by the dominant culture of the time. It is hardly surprising that the first border controls focusing on migration, the 1905 Aliens Act, happened as a result of right-wing agitation.

Though eugenics was widely discredited after the horrors of the Nazi regime and the rise of social democratic parties in Europe, it never fully disappeared. It continues to be an issue of concern among wealthy elites who fund many of the organisations keeping it alive. In the US the likes of David Rockefeller, the Ford Foundation and their ilk continue to work to promote a fear of over-population in the Global South.

The argument found another foothold through a number of influential writers resurrected Malthus's original arguments and applied them to the burgeoning populations in non-industrialised, mostly ex-colonial, countries. It was Rockefeller who set up the organisation which has now become the UN Population Fund whose policies are demonstratively founded on Malthusianism. Often these politics have been sanitised by dressing them up as a concern to prevent famine and poverty, while happily fitting neatly in with the neo-liberal agenda driving a neo-colonisation of the Global South in an effort to tap into its resources.

It was these elites, working from a misanthropic agenda, who have been

⁸ Hence the advocating of population controls is often referred to as *Malthusianism*.

responsible for pushing and funding numerous birth control policies across the Global South, including forced sterilisation of the poor. In conjunction, free-market economists argue that the heavy population ‘burdens’ stop these countries from being able to grow their way out of poverty, so allowing the blatant social injustices to be swept under the carpet.

In the UK population dropped off the political agenda, but re-emerged in the 1980s with attacks on the welfare state, most notably around the issue of single mothers. Only later did it become the acceptable face of racism when ‘welfare scroungers’ widened to include the increasing number of migrants, in part whipped up by those opposing EU integration policies.⁹

Theoretical Developments

However, concern around population has become increasingly present in the discussions of left wing liberalism. Biologist Paul Ehrlich and environmentalist William Petersen drew attention to the consumption of resources that would occur by an infinitely increasing population. Their work is flawed because they fail to take into account the vast social inequalities that exist; nevertheless it is widely drawn upon.

In particular, Ehrlich's **I PAT** equation has proven to be enormously popular. The equation can be summarized as:

$$\textit{Environment Impact} = \textit{Population} \times \textit{Affluence} \times \textit{Technological Factor}$$

where:

Environment Impact essentially measures sustainability;

Affluence measures consumption per person;

Technological Factor measures efficiency of goods/production.

Liberal responses to climate change revolve around these variables; some find hope that we will develop sufficient technological advances to offset the other issues (e.g. carbon capture and storage) while others use the role of affluence to justify green austerity measures. Unsurprisingly, there is an accompanying re-legitimation of population control as a tool – something that has been readily taken up by environmental commentators such as Jonathan Porritt,

⁹ See “Angry Young Men, Veiled Young Women” by The Corner House.

David Attenborough and James Lovelock (all involved in the Optimum Population Trust).

The current financial crisis has opened a new avenue for population issues to return to prominence. Left-leaning liberals and social democrats have sought to create a new approach to capitalism which manages the ecological crisis. The leading theories emerging are the concept of ‘*prosperity without growth*’¹⁰ and the related theory of ‘*steady state*’ economics¹¹.

While on the face of it they are proposing a radical re-writing of capitalism, there is no substantial analysis of power relations or tackling of its inherent inequalities. Most variations of economic steady state theory require stable population levels. While it is unlikely that capitalism is ever going to adopt these theories they do, in their current forms, legitimise mainstream calls for measures of control regardless of their authoritarian features.

Deconstructing ‘Over-breeding’

If there is one fear that can be said to characterise these debates it is that some countries which are perceived to be breeding too much, in particular in sub-Saharan and central Africa where fertility rates remain considerably above the global average – though countries are rarely mentioned by name, the focus on the fertility rates over other factors is a clear indicator of where the ‘blame’ is perceived to lie. Thus, despite their minimal impact in terms of producing carbon or consumption of resources, they are targets of a rhetoric that does not acknowledge distinctions between the impact of richer countries and the rest of the ‘under-developed’ world. From another perspective this is amounts to institutional racism.

When it comes to climate change and CO₂ production, Fred Pearce is clear that it is over-consumption not over-breeding that remains at the heart of the issue:

Let’s look at carbon dioxide emissions: the biggest current concern because of climate change. The world’s richest half billion people — that’s about 7 per cent of the global population— are responsible for half of the world’s carbon dioxide emissions. Meanwhile, the poorest

¹⁰ See the book of the same name by Tim Jackson, a leading figure of sustainability research.

¹¹ e.g. the writings of Herman Daly, or “*Common Wealth*” by Jeffrey Sachs.

50 per cent of the population are responsible for just 7 per cent of emissions. Virtually all of the extra 2bn or so people expected on this planet in the coming 30 or 40 years will be in this poor half of the world. Stopping that, even if it were possible, would have only a minimal effect on global emissions, or other global threats.

Ah, you say, but what about future generations? All those big families in Africa will have yet bigger families. Well, that's an issue of course. But let's be clear about the scale of the difference involved. The carbon emissions of one American today are equivalent to those of around four Chinese, 20 Indians, 30 Pakistanis, 40 Nigerians or 250 Ethiopians. A woman in rural Ethiopia can have ten children and, in the unlikely event that those ten children all live to adulthood and have ten children of their own, the entire clan of more than a hundred will still be emitting less carbon dioxide than you or me. It is over-consumption, not over-population that matters.¹²

There is, however, evidence that undermines the political assumptions which create this fear of over-population. For example, while it is true that total population has been growing, what has been driving this is the fact that people are living much longer as mortality rates drop. This can be seen as a consequence of the fact that what has driven population growth more than anything is increased energy use. This was first demonstrated in the 1950 through the demographic work of Carlo Cipolla¹³.

In the past there has been a lag of several generations as culture adapts. That is, the more energy a society can access the longer the average lifespan; so greater numbers survive to a reproductive age. Then comes the fall in fertility rates as people react to the advantages that come with access to energy and new products. The result is a population burst (most noticeably as happened during the Industrial Revolution) followed by a period of declining fertility rates which act to stabilise or slow the population growth. The problem lies primarily with the initial rapid population growth, which brings about demographic upheavals and changes in the human geography.

As more of the world goes through the process of industrialisation, each

¹² *"The Overpopulation Myth"*, Fred Pearce, 2010, <http://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/2010/03/the-overpopulation-myth/>

¹³ *"An Economic History of the World Population"*, Carlo M. Cipolla, 1962.

country is likely go through this demographic change. Post-industrial nations have already made the transition. This is of course a simplistic picture which needs more nuance due to effects varying from country to country (e.g. the 'one child' policy in China).

The key point is that actual fertility rates across the globe, (especially in the post-industrial nations) have been dropping steadily since the 1950s. It is approaching the point where the long term forecast, assuming current trends, is for global population to peak before beginning to shrink. At the moment, the overall effect that though the world's population is continuing to grow, it is also a steadily ageing one. In his thorough analysis the author Fred Pearce¹⁴ unpacks many myths around population and documents the right-wing agendas driving efforts to restrict population in growth in the majority world.

As early as the 1970s¹⁵ it was shown that the most significant factor in reducing fertility rates is the empowerment of women both socially and economically. Statistically, women given the ability to take greater control over their future have fewer children. Hence, the current global decline in fertility rates.

At the other end of the scale, people who have no economic security for old age generally produce more children, and this pushes up fertility rates. For example, for a woman in rural India who needs to have a son capable of looking after her in old age must have an average of 6.3 children. Economic poverty is the problem. Which neatly brings the argument back to class struggle.

Women who are disproportionately targeted in population control programmes. Their choices are removed in policies that simultaneously reinforce patriarchal systems. Even when it is not done through coercion these policies are applied through manipulation of the impoverished classes giving them Faustian choices while wealthier elites are rarely expected to conform to the same standards. In societies where children are an integral part of cultural life this is problematic on many levels.

In post-industrial nations fertility rates are now less than what is needed to replace the current population. However, this also is used to feed fears of

¹⁴ See footnote 6

¹⁵ For an overview see "*Limits to Growth*", Meadows, Meadows, Randers & Behrens, 1972 and the "30 Years Update", 2004.

migrant populations becoming “too large” - that is, threatening the ‘indigenous culture’s’ structures of power and privilege. We are not only going to be over run – we are going to be out-bred as well! In this way poverty, race and ‘over-breeding’ are all inter-connected in mainstream commentary in a demeaning fashion and ultimately to a demonising effect.

Rarely do ‘solutions’ to over-population, whether from ‘progressive’ economists, or neo-Malthusian environmentalists, actively address the issues of culture or impact of population debates themselves. Nor do they look at effects on women, which is symptomatic of solutions being imposed by a fundamentally patriarchal and capitalist system.

However, it is often the governments, academia and NGOs of post-industrial countries that are in the position of deciding what the problems are and who get to frame the debates. This can be as simple as putting forth experts dispensing ‘facts’ and implying that the rest of the world is unable to help themselves, let alone best know their needs. This reinforces the inequalities they benefit from but also allows their culpability in using an exploitative system, clearly part of the problem, to be hidden.

The Fred Pearce quote on how the problem of over-consumption is re-framed as one of over-population is an example of this in action: blame is apparently being spread equally among everyone in the world, without acknowledging that some are far more significant contributors to the problem than others. Elsewhere, the language employed is used to downplay the agency of the rest of the world, as was clear from the way poorer nations were treated around the COP15 summit.

The necessity of challenging these power relations based on positions of privilege is covered later.

Migration & Capitalism



Humans have been on the move since the beginning of time. There is nothing happening now that has not happened before, whether the large scale upheavals are due to a change in climate, political turmoil, or simply for economic reasons. Migration has been a both political tool to subdued trouble provinces¹⁶ and an economic tool through the relocation of pliable, cheap labour. It is as much about internal movement as it is transnational. The largest single migration in history is the 200 million

Chinese who have moved from the countryside to the cities, providing the workforce for its current economic boom.

Migration is also part of the capitalist system, providing cheap labour that is easily exploited. There are pros and cons for communities affected by net outward migration. It can lead to a loss of valuable skills; on the other hand it can lead to a net inflow of wealth as many migrants send remittances back home to support their families.

Whatever the reason, capitalism and nation states regularly usually play a role in why people move and how they are treated. This article focuses on capitalism's role in driving transnational migration, in particular, how it creates the basis of privilege for natives of destination countries in driving social upheaval in the rest of the world. This can be broken down into four principal, overlapping factors.

Neo-Colonialism

The world may have shaken off many of the fetters of imperialism after the Second World War, but it was never entirely freed. Neo-colonialism is the economic dominance over a country with the aim of gaining access to its resources without actually running it. It is motivated by the steady exhaustion

¹⁶ For example, the Romans use of forced resettlement of conquered lands nearly two millennia ago, the Ulster Plantation of the early 17th Century or the resettlement of ethnic Russians and Han Chinese in occupied states during the 20th Century.

of resources in the post-industrial world, in particular of fossil fuels, and the fact that many of the ex-colonies sit on untapped reserves.

Post-industrial and emerging economies and multi-national companies are all involved, from China and UK-based hedge funds buying up vast tracts in Africa to produce food for their home markets, to the likes of Shell and BP searching for oil.¹⁷

Effectively, the capitalists (including China which is switching to a market economy) are re-visiting the Global South for a new round of pillaging, though they had never fully left. With it comes destabilisation and corruption. There is a steady pattern of elites reaping rewards while the majority lose their livelihoods, whether being driven off their land or having their water supplies destroyed. Many more end up having to flee because of resulting political oppression and conflict over resources.

Economic development (from dams to wildlife reserves) forces 15 million people per year from their homes, more than conflict and climate change combined¹⁸. The funding for much of this comes from the post-industrial nations and China. People become the victims of a demand that originates with the consumers of the post-industrial world. Many end up having to search for new ways of supporting themselves, feeding the sweatshops and shanty towns of the world.

These are not people leaving because they simply want to be richer; they are leaving because they have little choice.

The Great Recession

The recent, indeed ongoing, financial crisis has contributed negatively to the dialogue around population, migration and climate change in two ways:

1) It has pushed the need for action on climate change off the agenda, allowing the governments and capitalists of the G20 group of nations to re-affirm that growth of their economies is the most immediate concern. This is justified with the dubious argument that without stabilising the capitalist system then they cannot afford the adaptations needed to tackle climate change.

¹⁷ For a good overview see *"Rising Powers, Shrinking Planet,"* Michael Klare, 2009.

¹⁸ See Christian Aid's report *"Human Tide: the real migration crisis"*, 2007.

The result is vital targets for CO₂ reduction are pushed back ever further. The further they get put back then the greater the changes that are required to adapt to them and the greater the damage done to the countries of the Global South in the meantime.¹⁹

2) It has allowed fears over job security to dominate the discourse around migration. The drive to austerity typically hurts those at the bottom of the wealth pyramid the most. Yet, rather than class struggle against the wealthy at the top, the working class are being told to blame the migrants.

The gross injustice is that the wealth of the richest continues to grow; bankers in particular have barely suffered. The financial crisis has become an opportunity to return to Malthusian and Thatcherite attacks on the most disadvantaged classes in, of all things, the name of economic prudence.

Climate Change

Though not currently a major force behind migration patterns, climate change will inevitably become a significant factor. It did not appear from nowhere, but is a product of two hundred years of intense industrialisation in the West, which is now being 'out-sourced' to 'emerging' nations. Coal and then oil have driven the industrialisation of the world; post-industrial society would not exist as it is without them and it remains utterly dependent on their continued exploitation. The main point here, though, is that the greenhouse gasses driving climate change not a recent phenomena of the last decade or so, but are the accumulation of centuries of burning fossil fuels.

Consumption of fossil fuels is still increasing steadily and there is no way to decouple the actions of one country from another as consumption now works on a global level. The result has been no real attempt to put a brake on the systemic problems creating the situation, not that it was ever a likely scenario without radical social change removing the elites who benefit most from the current system.

The effects of climate change will get worse, meaning more displacement. The alteration to the biosphere means a loss of resilience overall, even though some places will be less dramatically affected than others. Changes in weather patterns wreak incredible havoc, not just ruining crops, but the underlying soil.

¹⁹ See, for example, the Dysophia series "*The Crisis of Crises*"

Rising sea levels will force people away from the existing coastal regions. If people cannot farm then they have no choice but to leave for somewhere they can make a semblance of a living, even if it remains subsistence.

As well as the immediate human misery, the huge economic and social impacts will limit people and governments' ability to manage the situation, financially or otherwise. Climate change and the resultant ecological stress have already been singled out as a significant cause of conflict across Africa. The greater the displacements, the greater the chances that conflict will occur - causing yet more misery and migration.

Carbon Imperialism: another indignity

The post-industrial world is not seeking to change its own behaviour but, outrageously, to export its guilt to countries whose people have always had some of the lowest carbon footprints.

'Carbon offsetting', 'carbon trading' schemes and UN funded projects such as REDD²⁰ are sending our problems to the Global South with the inevitable consequences for local populations. As well as being exposed as unaccountable greenwash (few such projects are actually sustainable or preserve native ecosystems, being run with profit as the longer term goal²¹), where these programmes do actually take place it comes at a huge cost to the people living in the area, justifying land grabs by politicians and corporations.

Thus, the upheavals causing migration is as much by driven international capital as it is internal processes. There is little attempt in the mainstream of the post-industrial nations to acknowledge the role at the multi-national mining, meat and timber companies who are part and parcel of the problem. Given that their profits require exploitation of cheap resources to produce consumables, and it is these profits which in turn prop up pension funds and share prices, this is hardly surprising. When indigenous populations are mentioned, it is in the abstract, or of the supposed benefits they will get from investment, which the post-industrial world is kindly giving them. Importantly, they are denied agency by having their own voices and needs ignored.

²⁰ "Reducing Emissions from Forest Destruction & Degradation"

²¹ See Redd-Monitor.org or CarbonTradeWatch.org for more details.

Privilege & Scarcity

Living in the post-industrial world

The awkward truth is that living in the post-industrial gives the vast majority of us far more than most in the Global South will ever have. We enjoy enormous benefits, from the welfare state to the purchasing power of the corporations and governments that sustain our environment. Just living in the UK provides access to safety nets and charities that most of the world will never benefit from. This is not to say that there is not real suffering in the UK or that relative poverty is not an issue, but scavenging from skips in the UK is not on a par with those whose livelihoods are based on scavenging toxic landfill sites.

We have the luxury to tinker with limiting the ecological damage in our daily lifestyles, whether by using alternative energy sources, buying 'sustainable' wood products and so on. This is due in part to the fact that we as nations, have managed to export most of our pollution to other countries, whether as destructive manufacturing processes or by sending them toxic waste. Nor do we have to live with land grabs, poisoned water or air too dangerous to breathe. Our villages are not being sold from beneath us - not so much a precarity of jobs, but of life itself. A comparison of mortality and health rates shows that starkly.

For all that our unions and politicians bemoan the decline in manufacturing, it has not simply disappeared. Instead, it has been sent abroad to exploit cheaper labour. In turn, the increased profit margin creates rising share prices, thus allowing pension funds and insurance companies to make payouts to the enfranchised citizens of the western nations. There are few of us, born in the post-industrial world, who do not benefit from that 'birth-right'; we all enjoy the products of resources extracted with the aid of oppressive regimes, such as fuel that brings us our wide choice of food, or the Coltan used in almost all hi-tech electrical goods.

Mainstream debates in this area focus around the role of technology. For example, can advances shrink our ecological footprint while maintaining existing living standards? Or will technology be able to lower CO₂ emissions? Undeveloped 'green' technology is touted as the holy grail of sustainable capitalism.

These are distractions. It does not matter if the footprint of individual items is brought down when ever more of them are produced. Many of these

technologies do not yet exist and are likely to have their own knock-on effects. Issues of ownership and accessibility of technology are rarely addressed, nor the assumptions around access to the resources on which technology depends. In many cases the information, the resources and the capital to establish the technologies them are simply not available, making them a privilege for those who do have access to all three.

Fears around population are also, ultimately, a distraction. The combined ecological footprints of the new people being born to the poor across the globe are nothing compared to those of the wealthy 10% who control most of the world's resources. That wealthy 10% includes a sizeable chunk of the inhabitants of the post-industrial world, not just those sitting at the top.

This means challenging the system as it currently is, not allow ourselves to be side-tracked into handing over our responsibility to a blind faith in unknown future technologies developed by corporations and governments.

Acknowledging we are privileged

We cannot really deny that living in the post-industrial world provides us with privilege. The framework for analysis of oppression in the UK cannot ignore oppression caused by us beyond our borders and its effects at home. Oppression is global and as consumers of a global society we should not be denying our own agency as consumers and with it our own culpability.

The economies that feed us and provide welfare use stolen wealth we all benefit from regardless of our politics. We can attempt to step out of the system but there is a danger in this of shirking responsibility. As long as that ability to step out is denied to others it remains a privilege. Barriers to this ability to step out of the system can be as simple as not having access to a welfare state to fall back upon if things do go wrong, or the money to purchase the resources needed to make it a viable option. Access to welfare and education are privileges, even if they are ones we have not asked for.

Yet, we fight without question to maintain welfare and education without being explicit that they are privileges that many in the world do not benefit from - especially when it is not acknowledged that it is exploitation that is at present helping to underwrite the economies of welfare states. That we would like to extend this as privilege to all does make it any less of a privilege. The problem here is, when the demands remain rooted in the institutions of

capitalist society and its social relations, and thus are isolated from the full consequences of their impacts on others.

Being privileged means benefiting from an institutional hierarchy that needs to be challenged. Just as our society is institutionally racist in the way its institutions cause disadvantage to persons of colour, the same is true of class. From the perspective of many in the world, living somewhere like Britain is a position of privilege – one that is maintained by border controls.

Developing analysis around fears of scarcity

Most of the fears around opening borders, of over-population and migration is that people might lose their jobs and thus their privileges. Yet, how do we justify those jobs in the first place if they come at the expense of others? And when people say that jobs should only go to those who have been lucky to be born within these borders, is that not nationalism in disguise?

Do we have a right to enjoy a better standard of living with higher degrees of life chances than someone born elsewhere in the world? Surely life chances should not be a geographical or political lottery. We do not accept it from a UK perspective, so why accept it from a global one?

Nevertheless, the fear of scarcity is a potent manipulator of public opinion around population and migration. Scarcity is also used to generate fears around austerity. Migrants are characterised as thieves of what is given to the majority of people to scabble around for. Clearly it fails to address the fact that the elites at the top of society have vastly more wealth (something that can also be applied on a global perspective). While this seems an obvious truism, it is worrying that even in times of financial crisis and growing calls for austerity it has not gained more traction in society as a whole.

Part of the problem may lie in the fact that scarcity is not an easy debate, tied up as it is, with how resources should be redistributed, what (and who) should be given precedence and how we relate to the different cultures. While we in the post-industrial world talk about solidarity with indigenous populations, too often we remain blind to the deeper role our society plays in the exploitation that leads to political and economic oppression.

What is needed is much deeper analysis. I would argue that this means avoiding the primitivist position whereby civilisation should be simply

abandoned as this is basically walking away without taking responsibility. Nor should we take the perspective of eco-socialism which, while it challenges the dominance of capitalism, reduces the argument to one of more ecological forms of production without acknowledging the radical shifts in power relations and society actually required, or the problems associated with a focus on production itself²².

There is a need for a more general understanding of the way capitalism has reshaped our own society and even our attitudes as anarchists by granting us privileges. Too often we allow capitalism to blind us of the true extent to which our lifestyles and workplaces are dependent on the global picture.

Fear over society not having enough to go around, whether it jobs or welfare, is regularly quoted in population and migration debates. We need to address this, but in order to do it with confidence we need clearer ideas of what we want to replace the current system with - something more than academically nice-sounding words that ultimately translate to very little of substance. Much of radical discourse appears mired between quoting facts or triumphing over other peoples' social movements. There is relatively little debate around what is actually sustainable from a global or UK perspective, where equal life chances are accorded to all irrespectively. This is the elephant in the room we do not confront as a movement.

I appreciate that the question is not being answered here either, but I hope that by posing it we can start addressing it. By understanding our privilege better we can come up with solutions that not just avoid discrimination but ensure that all stakeholders retain their voice and agency in the radical reshaping of global society which is needed.

How the sustainability debate maintains capitalist privilege

To put this on a more practical basis, let's look at the oft recited statement that those in post-industrial countries have an average lifestyle which, if everyone was to live, would require four Earths to sustain. There are a number of ways to deconstruct this statement.

1) The obvious trap is that less people means more to go around, allowing us

²² See, for example, the Belem Ecosocialist Declaration, <http://www.ecosocialistnetwork.org/Docs/Mfst02/BelemDeclaration.htm>

all to have bigger footprints in a 'sustainable' way. This is a superficial argument which does not challenge inequalities as it fails to understand twin drivers of growth and economy of scale play in capitalism. Reducing population does not necessarily reduce consumption, especially where there are already billions living far less than a 'one-planet' lifestyle.

2) This statement has the implicit assumption that what is needed is a global society where, if everyone was to live to the same standards, then that lifestyle would require only one planet in total. What actually does this mean in practice? What actual changes would have to happen to make this possible?. There is much written about what is heading in the right direction, but little on what would actually amount to true global sustainability. Without these sorts of answers the statement only serves to hide power relations.

Is it even desirable? There are many in Global South who would take issue with the ideas being put forwards by the post-industrial world NGOs, etc as reflecting the latter's culture, and that is not something they want. This sort of nuanced consideration of a future global society and the myriad of cultures that would make it up is often just as absent from anarchist tracts, a likely hangover from Socialist thought which perceived the world in a monolithic form driven almost exclusively by scientific 'progress'.

3) Alternatively, there remains a danger of social inequality as this statement is an average. Some people can have above average consumption as long as there is enough living below the average. The assumption is that us in the post-industrial worlds will be so blessed. In this picture, raising the standards of others, while limiting ours only a little, is sufficient to address the imbalance. Thus inequalities are preserved.

4) It contains the insidious assumption that we in the post-industrial world know best. This is expressed in many ways – through liberal, paternalistic attitudes; or through access to education, language and access to the centres of power. (While I clearly have argued that anarchism is the best theory to take us forward, I am probably just as guilty of making this kind of assumption.)

From a global perspective, the privileged position of the post-industrial world means that much of the political debate and mainstream media commentary is grounded in proposals that ultimately benefit the post-industrial world. This happens in debates regarding the protection of indigenous rights in the face of mining and oil corporations which do not addressing the fact that is to feed

our consumerist society and pensions funds that the extraction is needed in the first place. The fear of scarcity is behind the debate, yet fundamental questions such as why we need the resources in the first place are being hidden. Again, the dominant system is supported rather than challenged.

Another privilege comes in to play through who has access to or creates the texts framing the political debate and to who gets the time and money to access the international networks being established. This applies as much to grassroots campaigners as to trans-national institutions and NGOs. Thus there is a need to be wary that it is not the voices of the wealthy nations that come to dominate the demands of the opposition.

A way to recognise this is by considering how many of the desires we seek to liberate, to use the anarchist cliché, are based on having a well-to-do economy. For most people in the world, those desires are alien as they simply have neither the opportunity nor economic freedom to indulge them. This is before we even acknowledge that for increasing numbers the climate chaos is a matter of life or death.

Ultimately, we need to not be asking what we can do for those who do not enjoy our privileges but how we can fight for their demands as allies within the spaces we have privileged access to, and to challenge our own hidden privileges. This is not incompatible with the basic anarchist desires of freedom and equality for everyone alike. It is also part of actively demonstrating solidarity and mutual aid - the things that define our politics.

A final word

In writing this article I have had to recognise and learn more about how my own privilege and my own cultural background has influenced and shaped the arguments presented here. It has been a process that has opened my eyes that bit more. My apologies for the imperfections that remain and my thanks to those who asked awkward questions of my assumptions.

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Climate Justice? Climate Refugee? capitalism, nationalism and migration

steph davies

These days, everyone from Coca Cola to the BNP has a position on climate change. Since COP15 there has been a general shift to the right across Europe with politicians, invoking fear through alarming statistics in connection to migration, prospering through the recession and the rhetoric of precarity and emergency that surrounds climate change discourse. Migration has become the scapegoat for a myriad of problems, thus legitimising increasing levels of repression against “illegals”. Whilst an analysis of capitalism in connection to climate change is becoming more common (although at times tokenistic), its relationship to nationalism, especially in connection to climate change issues, is often overlooked. The development of the “climate refugee” further perpetuates this model, where nation states are called upon to manage migration and control populations.

The “climate justice” movement is a direct response to the failings of international democracy to deal with the threat of climate change, and is gaining momentum, as expressed through the mobilisations around COP15 and the World Conference on Climate Change and Mother Earth Rights in Cochabamba, Bolivia. But what are the limits of this it's new vocabulary?

COP15 and migration

In Copenhagen about 2,000 people participated in the “Climate No Borders” demonstration, targeting the Ministry of Defence. The demonstration aimed to highlight the complexity of issues surrounding migration and climate change. The Danish Prime Minister -now leader of NATO- promotes a reinforcement of Fortress Europe through the expansion of organisations such as Frontex, the controversial armed border agency, and “UAD's” (“unmanned autonomous drones) as a response to the threat of increased migration.

The “International Campaign for Climate Refugees” (ICCR) was launched at the Klimaforum during COP15. Delegates from Sudan and Bangladesh were

among those calling for “a new legal framework for climate refugees to realise their social, political, cultural and economic rights.” This “framework” would result in an opening up of the Geneva Convention, and is supported by NGO's such as the Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF) and the Forced Migration Organisation (FMO). But what would a climate refugee look like? Without wishing to undermine or belittle those who are currently displaced or endangered due to environmental factors, can such a category ever be implemented? Does it not add further legitimacy to the racist methodology employed by the border regime which relies on the concept of “good” and “bad” migrants, where “victims” and “opportunists”, “economic”, “political” (and now maybe “environmental”) are segregated and forced to prove their worthiness, need and threat?

False-solutions and “post-politics”?

During COP15 the Climate Justice Action (“CJA”) and Climate Justice Now (“CJN”) networks demanded an analysis of concepts such as “climate colonialism” (or “CO2lonialism”) and “ecological debt” in an attempt to understand climate change as a systemic problem, the result of capitalist expansion and colonialist systems of domination. In a reader analysing the “post-politics” of climate change, it was argued that the CJA and CJN are:

“pushing the tension between the liberal carbon consensus and a properly anti-capitalist analysis to its limits”.

The Climate Camp “CCA” model is also situated somewhere within this problematic maze. However, whilst the CCA has also highlighted “market-driven approaches” as a red herring, it has failed to out population control as a “false solution”. The CCA is currently dealing with some difficult tensions, briefly considering a re-brand to become “Climate Justice UK”. The discussion paper published after the Bristol gathering asked:

“whether CCA is first and foremost a movement against climate change, or a movement against capitalism?”

Another discussion paper reveals further attempts to confront these complex issues. After the Amsterdam meeting the CJA cited: “Climate justice means recognising that the capitalist growth paradigm, which leads to over extraction, overproduction and overconsumption stands in deep contrast to the biophysical limits of the planet and the struggle for social justice.”

Both the CCA and the CJA are engaging in a discussion around what the CJA terms “colonising capitalism”, and the “logic of profit”. Now is the time to engage with the difficult issue of capitalism's bed fellow: nationalism. In order to acknowledge issues connected with what the CCA terms “socially just solutions”, it is essential that the dogma of nationalism and its methodology of authoritarianism are confronted as an essential component of the capitalist growth paradigm. The issues surrounding climate induced migration are inextricably linked to this. State sanctioned definitions such as the proposed “climate refugee” category will always reinforce these issues.

Who is a “climate refugee”?

The term “climate refugee” was coined in the 1970's and has been in a process of constant appraisal ever since. In the mid-1990s, Myers, whose alarming statistics are oft-quoted by both proponents and opponents of the “climate refugee” discussion extended the definition to include an explicit analysis based on “lively hood” and economic security. This was amended by Renaud and others in 2007 to include three distinct categories of ‘environment-related mass movement of people:

- environmentally motivated migrants
- environmentally forced migrants; and
- environmental refugees

The level of support that would be offered would be based on several “triggers”. Renaud also called for the introduction of “criteria to address the severity of the environmental process and the potential for return to places of origin” and the determination of that individual to remain in their home country, or is a so-called “secondary manifestation of other drivers”.

Re-examining the Geneva Convention

In 2006 the Maldives called for a re-opening of the Geneva Convention to include “climate refugees”, but this was scrapped by the UNHCR (United Nations Human Rights Commission), who “noted that most receiving States actually want to restrict the refugee regime further, rather than extend it in the current form”. During the COP15 summit, the IOM (International

Organisation for Migration) and the UNHCR, failed once again to engage with the debate surrounding issues connected with climate refugees. In their joint platform towards the end of the conference they questioned the appropriateness of the summit for these types of discussions. Questions posed by the Bangladeshi and Sudanese delegates were left unanswered.

NGO's such as the EJF and FMO call for a greater level of dignity for those entrapped in the asylum system. However, their demands for a new category of "climate refugee" further segregates and fail to acknowledge practically the complexities of causes that lead to migration. It is important to acknowledge and act in solidarity with those already displaced by climate change, but any prescriptive attempts to create a category of climate refugee by opening the 1949 Geneva convention can never be sufficient, and endanger the already shaky foundations on which it stands. Already asylum seekers with so-called "good" cases are frequently deported on the grounds of a lack of "proof". How can we ever really adapt this system which shows so little regard for the basic human "rights" it supposedly enshrines to include such a disparate category as climate refugee?

Members of the BNP and the far right attempt to use the Geneva Convention as a tool to legitimise their hysterical claims. In an open letter to the Independent Police Complaints Commission, some members argued: "The Geneva Convention clearly states that displacement by immigration is a crime against humanity. Thus any displacement would be Ethnocide." The EDL also use this rhetoric, calling for all nations, from Israeli, to Hindi, to stand up against the threat of Sharia law, commonly citing the transformation of churches into mosques as a further example of this "ethnocide".

Overpopulation

The BNP, the nations "true green party" argues that: "Unlike the fake "Greens"...the BNP is the only party to recognise that over-population – whose primary driver is immigration, as revealed by the government's own figures – is the cause of the destruction of our environment." Organisations such as the Optimum Population Trust develop this argument through various campaigns such as "PopOffsets", which aims to make its supporters "carbon neutral" by funding contraceptive programmes across the globe. Lovelock and Attenborough use the logic of the Gaia Hypothesis as a reason for tougher immigration policies in order to aid the planet in "self-regulation".

The demands for limits on population are not only the remit of the right, as the Permaculture Association's recently revised ethics demonstrate. The much discussed “third ethic” previously entitled ‘Fair Shares’ (in conjunction with “earth care” and “people care”) has been replaced with: “setting limits to population and consumption”. An explanatory text acknowledges that “setting limits to population is not about limiting people's free movement, tight border controls and a one child policy.” However, it fails to outline practically what a “limit to population” would involve. Who would set these limits? How would they be enforced? Once again, authoritarianism is not only unchallenged, but inferred.

Liberal nationalism

The concept of “climate justice” necessitates an analysis of the displacement caused by climate change and the “solutions” proposed by nation states. In order to truly bring about climate justice we must acknowledge the myriad of reasons that lead to migration, not through the perpetuation of systems encouraging a victim mentality but in opening the borders, enabling free movement and stopping practices which make it impossible for people to stay in their homes. As the Anarchist Federation observed:

Nationalism can be liberal, cosmopolitan and tolerant, defining the 'common interest' of the people in ways which do not require a single race.

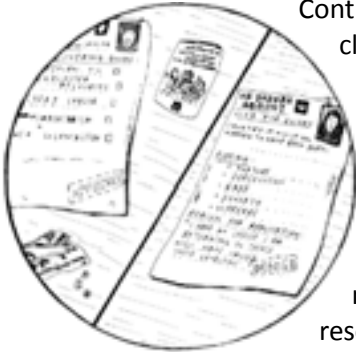
This liberal application of nationalism will only increase as “climate refugees” are enshrined in law, with those excluded further disempowered.

Migration and globalisation have disrupted fixed notions of class, with the conditions of individuals changing greatly through their precarious relationships to nation states. The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, states that the “UN must take proper measures to realize people's rights to the freedom of movement within and between state borders.” The ICCR calls for:

“A separate Safeguard Protocol (SP) should be framed to address climate victims under a rights and justice framework...as victims of global injustice caused by unequal and undemocratic global architecture”.

This “global architecture” is incapable of redressing any kind of balance or creating justice. In order to move beyond the dogma of victim and perpetrator it is essential to end all forms of migrations management which divide and categorise.

Reinforcing the borders



Contrary to the picture painted by “populationists” climate change will not result in millions of people seeking asylum in Europe. The majority of those displaced through the impacts of climate change in Africa move within that continent. In January 2010 Israel began work on a second wall, stretching between Rafah and Eliat, in an attempt to secure the nation from the “surge” of migrants from Africa. A combination of a lack of

resources required to embark on a journey to the EU, the increased militarisation of the borders of Europe, and the desire to stay closer to countries of origins means that many migrants will not travel to the UK.

“Fortress India” is being constructed along the Assam-Bangladesh border, inspired by Israel's wall in the West Bank. On completion, the fence will be as long as America’s 2,000-mile border with Mexico, which is currently being reinforced using several different technologies employed by the US “Fence Lab” including concrete, razor wire, electric shocks and increased patrols and surveillance. 80,000 Indian soldiers of the Border Security Force “defend” the border, which has been legitimised by the impending threat of increased migration from Bangladesh. But the death toll is rising on both sides, with people being shot indiscriminately in order to ensure “national security”. Climate change is the perfect framework through which nation states can rationalise and reinforce their borders, from Bangladesh, to Calais, where migrant camps are routinely cleared by order of the Mayor who promotes “sustainable development” and a “preserved environment, a city pleasant to be in”.

In Bolivia the People's Conference asked some difficult questions: “What means should be adopted confront climate change migration? Why talk about migrants and not climate change refugees? How can the human rights of

climate change migrants be guaranteed? How can developed countries compensate climate change migrants?”

Definitions emerging from the forum included “climate refugees”, “forced migrants” and the “climate displaced”. These concepts are useful in unpacking some of the main issues in relation to climate change and migration, especially in acknowledging the impacts of the freedom of capital and resources in contrast with people. However, the demands of the people's assembly still call for legally enshrined definitions and aid funds, rather than challenging the border regime.

It is important to act in solidarity now to ensure that those displaced by climate change can be supported. Nation states will not provide the framework within which to do this. Neither will arbitrary definitions which further divide and rule, and fail to account for the unforeseen impacts of climate change. An anti-authoritarian response, including an opening of the borders, is the only possible methodology through which to confront the issue of climate change and migration. Any response to the threat of climate change seeking to acknowledge the “rights” of a specific group will fail to usurp the authoritarianism that protects economic expansion. Capitalism must be analysed in relation to the nationalism which ensures its continuation and this cannot happen within the framework of the “climate refugee”.

This article first appeared in Shift Magazine, issue 9, June 2010.

Anarchism against Climate-Barbarism

javier sethness

In his rather terrifying 2008 book *Six Degrees: Our Future on a Hotter Planet*, British environmental journalist Mark Lynas—a writer whose works and findings would surely tie him to some sort of eco-socialist politics, were he not presumably to be ideologically and materially tied to the hegemonic state of affairs—reflects on the present climate catastrophe by asserting that humans are “indescribably privileged” to be born into the only planet on which life is known to exist in the universe¹. In a sense, of course, Lynas here has a point: human existence and consciousness in theory and in practice allow for wonderful possibilities. Nonetheless, his assertion here by itself could well be taken as legitimating the various injustices and horrors of existing society—or can it be said that a comfortable Western journalist and a starving Nigerian child are similarly privileged in life-circumstances?

What can be said, is that human existence potentially permits for the creation of specific social conditions that could perhaps justify Lynas' claims regarding the privilege of experiencing human life—that is to say, a classless global society governed by principles of liberty, equality, justice, and solidarity. Clearly, present society is rather far-removed from such ends; more worrying than this consideration is the fact that the spectre of catastrophic climate change promised by the perpetuation of prevailing social relations threatens forever to make impossible the realization of such a society, let alone the existence of any society at all.

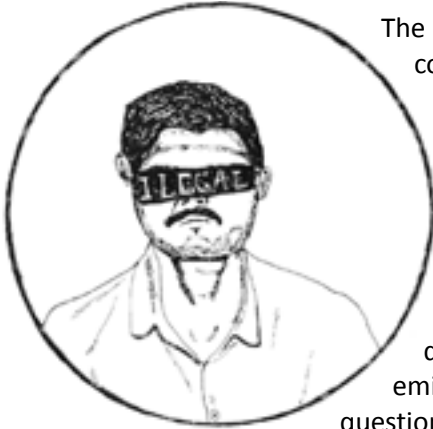
The present state of the Earth's climate systems is not likely terminal as regards the human prospect; it is, for all that, surely urgent. Some 20 million Pakistanis were displaced this summer by unprecedented floods resulting from unprecedented rains—one of the many effects of the higher average global temperatures provoked to date by anthropogenic climate change, since warmer air holds more moisture. Some 10 million residents of the Sahelian countries of Niger, Chad, and Mali were reported in late June to be at serious

¹ (Washington, D.C.: National Geographic), p. 302

risk of dying of starvation as crops failed for the second consecutive year—likely to be due to increased average temperatures. The most severe rains in living memory have pummelled the lands of southern Mexico and Guatemala in recent weeks, flooding homes, inundating crops, and provoking landslides. The minimum summer extent of the Arctic's sea-ice was this year the third-lowest since records began; in August, an ice-island with an area of 100 square miles broke off Greenland's Petermann glacier—the most momentous of such developments in the region in nearly 50 years. These effects are being felt with the 0.8°C increase in average global temperatures beyond those that prevailed in pre-industrial times; were such temperature increases to reach 2°C, though, the totality of the Andes glaciers that presently provide water to millions in South America would no longer exist, and the Greenland ice sheet would be in terminal decline. With a 3°C increase, the Kalahari Desert can be expected to expand considerably, dispatching millions through famine, and the Amazon rainforest will likely collapse in a giant self-conflagration. At increases of 4°C and beyond, the viability of human society itself is placed into question.

Among many other effects, then—other, that is, than dramatically increasing starvation rates among the world's peoples, radically diminishing available fresh-water supplies, and rendering uninhabitable low-lying coastal zones the world over—climate change will provoke mass human migration movements. One group of such migrants are those coming to be known as climate refugees - individuals forced to abandon or flee their places of residence due to the various consequences of anthropogenic climate change. (As far as one understands, the concept of climate refugees carries with it no distinction between refugees and internally displaced people; international law considers refugees to be those who cross state boundaries following their displacement, while the internally displaced remain within the same country.) The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), responsible in the past 20 years for releasing a series of reports on climatology and global warming, estimates in its latest report (2007) that some 200 million individuals will be forced into exile by climate change before the end of the current century. Such an estimate, like much else to be found in the IPCC's 2007 report, is undoubtedly a conservative under-estimate: if average global temperatures increase by 6°C relative to pre-industrial levels during the twenty-first century—as climatologists are warning could well occur, given the grossly inadequate response presented by constituted power to the various threats posed by climate change—the number of persons displaced will certainly be in

the billions, not hundreds of millions; it is to imagined that the number killed will be of a similar amount.



The policy recommendations that follow from consideration of the “problem” of climate refugees range from institutional-reformist to totally revolutionary. Former approaches seem to call for the codification of the concept of 'environmental persecution' into international law and the global institution of national climate-refugee immigration quotas proportional to the greenhouse-gas emissions historically produced by the state in question, whereas the latter see in the devastation

likely to be produced by climate-displacement yet another reason to fundamentally re-order existing society. Of course, neither reformism nor radicalism should be expected from the world's states on this question, as on a myriad of others; the same entities that today deport thousands of members of 'lesser peoples' (France), criminalize unauthorized immigration (Arizona), suspend refugee applications for those fleeing the war-zones of Sri Lanka and Afghanistan (Australia), and construct large separation-barriers to cut-off populations vulnerable to climate change (India, following Israel's example) cannot reasonably be considered actors that will treat the problem of climate-displacement in a rational or humane fashion. Indeed, one need only consider the likelihood that the Republican Party will make significant electoral gains in the U.S. Congress this November to know that no progress will be made in the foreseeable future on official global climate-change policy, especially given that the oppositional Democrat-majority Congress has itself failed to pass legislation aimed at mitigating U.S. contributions to the catastrophe presently being enacted. Were a Republican controlled government to work toward the chilling future Gwynne Dyer sees for the U.S.-Mexico border on a climate devastated Earth—mined areas leading up to dauntingly-sized walls armed with auto-targeting machine guns²—it would, for all its horror, be nonetheless unsurprising. The current president, a Democrat, has already authorized Predator-drone overflights on the U.S.-Mexico border in addition to the

² *Climate Wars* (Scribe, 2008)

deployment National Guard troops.

The urgency of the intersection between looming climate catastrophe and the historical failures of hegemonic politics on this question potentially opens space for a radical eco-liberatory politics—anarchism. Anarchism's central tenets, of course, are an opposition to capitalism, and to the State: these institutions are principally responsible for anthropogenic climate change, the former by means of its inherent need for growth (profits), the latter through its protection and advancement of such. Many thinkers associated with libertarian socialism, moreover—for example, Murray Bookchin, Max Horkheimer, Theodor W. Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, and Cornelius Castoriadis—have developed rigorous critiques of the domination of nature demanded by liberalism, Marxism, and, it would seem, Karl Marx himself³. — despite the recent efforts made by John Bellamy Foster to rehabilitate him on these grounds. Importantly, furthermore, anarchism does not share orthodox Marxism's belief that capitalism will necessarily and inevitably be abolished; in this sense, perhaps, anarchism is more sensitive to the threat of relapse and regression into barbarism promised by climate change and can hence contribute to the displacement of theories and practices that defend the status quo and its likely futures better than can celebratory theories. Similarly, anarchism has rightly long expressed concern about the place of Marxist-Leninist politics in contemporary society; a brief review of the various negations overseen by Lenin and Trotsky before the former's death in 1924—the destruction of worker- and soldier-run *soviets*, the mass-imprisonment of anarchist critics, the suppression of the 1921 Kronstadt Commune as well as of the libertarian efforts of Nestor Makhno's Cossack bands in Ukraine—is instructive in this sense.

Anarchism, in short, has a great deal to contribute to political reflection and action in light of the threat of climate catastrophe. Its stress on autonomy (literally, 'self-legislation') is crucially important at present, given the entirely barbarous approaches to climate change advanced to date by the State in its defense of capital. Bookchin's concept of libertarian municipalism and Hannah Arendt's advocacy of the council system, if somehow realized in history somewhere in the near future, could theoretically allow for the development of a counter-power to the climate-barbarism presently being promoted by

³ In *Collected Works*, vol. 12, p. 132, Marx asserts “man” to be “the sovereign of nature.”

State and capital, were such participatory institutions to be governed by both reason and compassion. Recent efforts made by leftist political organizations in Montréal to close off certain areas of the city to car-traffic represent an example of what can be achieved in this sense, as does Ernest Callenbach's portrayal of what a participatory-ecological society could amount to in his 1975 novel *Ecotopia*: though the society he there describes is not anarchist, the work's importance as testimony to the necessity of throwing off the yoke of liberal-capitalist society as a precondition for ecological rationality is not to be underestimated. Moreover, the emphasis made by Peter Kropotkin, among other anarchist theorists, on the need for expropriating capital as a means by which to advance the project of anarchism is also direly crucial today: the resources presently afforded to capital and the State could of course much more reasonably be employed toward the development of a post-carbon global society in which people are afforded the material conditions needed to lead decent lives, free from the regressions of catastrophic climate change, than is the case with presently hegemonic consumerist and militaristic tendencies. In addition, Kropotkin's stress on mutual aid and solidarity should not readily be dismissed, in light of the various horrors to which climate change will subject humanity — and, it should be added, the non-human world — until and unless that which Adorno calls a “global self-conscious subject”⁴ intervenes to overthrow prevailing barbarism.

If allowed to continue, capitalism will induce climatic changes that threaten the world with mass-extinction of life and the collective suicide of humanity; such a monstrous system must undoubtedly, then, be suppressed, with socialism making a dramatic *encore* into history. It would certainly be better that such socialism, in place of emulating the authoritarianism advanced by Lenin and Trotsky after October 1917, be libertarian, and follow from the examples of Catalunya 1936, Paris 1968, and Chiapas from 1994 to the present.

Javier Sethness writes the Notes toward an International Libertarian Eco-Socialism blog at intlibecosoc.wordpress.com

⁴ Theodor W. Adorno, “Progress,” in *Benjamin: Philosophy, Aesthetics, History*, ed. Gary Smith, trans. Eric Krakauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), p. 85.



Border Controls and Freedom of Movement in an Age of Climate Chaos

no borders

We are here in Cochabamba partly to participate in the Migration and Climate Change working group. We are involved in the No Border network in the UK and Europe and have worked in solidarity with migrants at European and US-Mexican borders. We would like to take the opportunity of this space, to present our political positions around migration and to invite reflections and discussion with the perspectives that we find here in Bolivia.

Introduction:

Climate change is exacerbating factors which force people to migrate such as lack of access to land and conflict. The tiny proportion who attempt the expensive and dangerous journey, are met with militarised border controls on the journey to 'Fortress Europe' or North America. Labelled 'illegals,' they are denied basic rights and struggle to live in dignity, whilst becoming scapegoats for a range of social problems. The Global North states' historical development of capital accumulation, colonialism and carbon emissions, means they have a unique responsibility towards those who are displaced. Only those with the correct papers and commodities are free to move around the world. Those seeking a better life or moving to survive are increasingly denied this option. Failure to cut emissions is tantamount to genocide. Climate Justice means defending the principle of freedom of movement for all. Here we expand on seven main points to explain how the No Borders position can focus the debate on the root causes.

1. NATION STATES CAN NOT SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF CLIMATE CHANGE

In the same way that the straight lines that divide so much of the world were drawn by European statesmen to divide colonial possessions; the infrastructure that makes up a state has been designed and developed by the rich and powerful for the benefit of their own class. All countries are 'imagined communities,' members of even the smallest nation never know, meet, or

even hear of most of the other people in their country. This imagined community was created as a means to control the poor, to divide working people from their natural allies of other exploited people from across the globe. One of the reasons why we see that the COP process has failed is that at its core lies the inherent contradiction that nation states, who are competing economically, come together to solve the problem of climate change, which would have massive economic implications. Climate change is a symptom of economies which do not distribute wealth and instead need to keep on growing infinitely on a finite planet. To solve the climate crisis we must change the systems of production, consumption and exploitation of both natural resources and people. This also means a rejection of nationalism and the false division between citizens and non-citizens.

2. BORDERS EXIST TO PRESERVE INEQUALITIES

As a result of the hyper-exploitation of people and planet over the last hundred years we have increasingly unequal and therefore precarious societies. The position of gross inequality where 20% of the global population are responsible for 80% of global pollution, is the result of a long history of expropriation and oppression. Border controls can be seen as an attempt to avoid the inevitable consequences of imperialist conquest. Neo-liberal globalisation has continued to perpetuate the inequalities established during the colonial period. At one end of the spectrum we have carbon intensive lifestyles and a celebrity obsessed culture which is completely alienated from its devastating impacts. At the other are all those who struggle daily to live with basic dignity and enough food to eat. Immigration controls are used as a means to control labour and to restrict the ability of all workers to unite internationally. Immigration controls reinforce, spread and normalise racist attitudes by ensuring the existence of an “other”, “aliens”, “foreigners.” By intensifying immigration controls, whether to appease racists and fascists or for other reasons, racism is exacerbated.

3. BORDER CONTROLS ARE LETHAL AND YET INEFFECTIVE

Under global policies of ‘migration management’, borders mean watchtowers and barbed wire, and migrants are reduced to mere quotas. To realise their objectives, the European agency, Frontex – armed and in possession of considerable powers – executes a merciless hunt of migrants in maritime, aerial and terrestrial areas. This only forces people to seek alternative and inevitably more fatal access routes. For this reason there were 1,508 deaths at

the EU border were recorded in 2008 alone. The EU policy of the “free movement of persons,” within its borders has gone hand in hand with an attempt to build ‘Fortress Europe’; externalising EU borders into Africa and Asia with EU border guards patrolling the Mediterranean, Libya and off the West Coast of Africa. This entire system is overseen by the The International Organisation for Migration, (IOM) a 120 member intra- governmental organisation headed by the USA, that aims to manage migration worldwide for the benefit of capital.

Although it is not widely reported, so called non-lethal technologies on borders exist, for example semi-intelligent fences and unmanned aerial drones. In response to the projected displacement from climate change technologies are being developed based on racist assumptions, for example technologies that could target certain racial groups. The very same arms companies are not only profiting from conflicts but are now bidding for border policy contracts and internal surveillance mechanisms.

Yet despite this border controls do not work as a barrier but more of a filter, only allowing through those who are deemed useful or profitable and excluding those who are not. They can also be counter-productive to their stated aims as people who would seek to migrate temporarily are kept permanently inside, as we see on the US-Mexico border. People will continue to move whilst conditions remain intolerable. We must fight for freedom to stay while at the same time work towards open borders which allow people to mitigate for themselves the consequences of climate change and capitalism.

4. THE END OF TOLERANCE

In the UK and Europe we have seen a shift away from tolerance and human rights in relation to migration. This has been a gradual process of erosion of civil liberties through the War on Terror and increasingly repressive immigration policies. A new category of people has been developed, an underclass of so called “illegals”. We see enforced destitution, the refusal of any state support, people are prevented from working legally, and live in fear of forced deportation. Far from being a bastion of human rights and dignity, the UK is the only European country to use indefinite imprisonment of asylum seekers and foreign nationals, including children. Terror suspects are held without trial. At the same time we see the rise of far-right political parties, such as the British National Party, who position anti-immigration discourses as the solutions to environmental problems. As the global recession affects the

number of low-paid jobs available we see that immigrants are increasingly scape-goated for a range of problems from lack of housing to crime and societal breakdown. All this detracts attention from the real causes; capitalism and unequal social relations.

5. THE CATEGORY OF CLIMATE REFUGEE WILL NOT ADDRESS THE PROBLEM

The debate about immigration in Europe is dominated by right-wing views. Hence there is real fear about the terms of the climate refugee debate. Many fear that to open up the Geneva Convention, which still provides at least some protection to political refugees, would risk losing it all together. But there are other important considerations as we attempt to build a political struggle for those displaced by climate change. To claim asylum in the UK or Europe is a demeaning and degrading process. Individualised stories of suffering and persecution must be proved to a very high level and many times are not believed, despite scars, trauma etc. The arguments around climate refugees seem to be following this same path, people are portrayed as helpless victims. Not only does this remove people's political agency and , but carries the risk of merely appealing to the conscience of those who already accept a high level of degrading treatment for 'others' in the name of preserving their national identity.

6. WE MUST FOCUS ON STRUCTURAL CAUSES

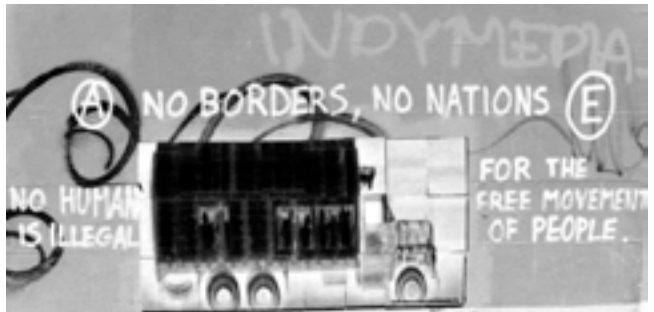
We believe that a more empowering way of talking about the issues would focus on the structural causes, in a politicised context of anti-racism, anti-fascism and anti-colonialism. We must talk about people's situation in terms of imperial relations, free trade agreements and the role of the military. States are already responding to the "threat" of people being displaced by climate change. If we limit ourselves to the discourse of refugees we will never be able to move beyond these divisions of human beings to a more egalitarian distribution of wealth and power. Therefore, we need a strong global movement that recognises the historic role of borders and immigration controls, and fights for truly universal principles of equality and liberty. This is made even more urgent by climate change, but we must not let this current crisis be used as a vehicle for the further entrenchment of repressive authority and exploitation.

7. CREATING POLITICAL SPACE TO IMAGINE A WORLD WITHOUT BORDERS

Until we step outside of constructed national interests we can never create real solutions to climate change. We must reject claims that borders equate to security. Unless we deal with the root causes of climate change, every person on the planet is a potential climate refugee. Rather than campaigning for a further category of people which can then be arbitrarily applied by those in power, we must demand Freedom to Stay and Freedom of Movement for All.

No Borders is an anti-authoritarian position rejecting any border regime which allows for the free flow of capital, whilst limiting the movement of human beings. We support the struggles for the freedom of movement and freedom to stay for all, and an end to the exploitation of people and resources around the world for the benefit of the few. We support the radical climate justice movement which challenges the use of the threat of climate chaos as an excuse for even more harsh migration and social controls. No Borders groups and their allies organise around many concrete campaigns including, camps of radical convergence, direct action to work in solidarity with migrant struggles, resisting immigration prisons and supporting anti-deportation campaigns. We are part of a transnational network of autonomous groups calling for unity between exploited people against the rich and powerful. We imagine a future without migration controls, capitalism or the state, based on the principles of freedom and equality.

People put their bodies in motion, and this motion is a movement. A movement against the borders, against the detention camps, against the world system as it stands. Not a movement of leaders and party campaigns, but of physical crossings and antagonism.



Solidarity and Integration

Thoughts on migration, integration & anarchy

gemma larson

A key message oft-heard in connection to no borders, as both a political position, and a transnational network, is that of “freedom of movement for all”. Many (including myself) hold this up as a lofty ideal, quote it on demonstrations and in press releases, but what does it actually mean? As with prison abolition, it can seem difficult at times to stay true to this demand, to be honest with yourself about how the place you occupy in society in terms of perceived gender/ sexuality/ nationality/ political disposition can alter this view, and what the limitations of these demands are. Why am I working to resist the border regime on the streets of Calais so that people, including those who were former border guards in their ‘home’ country can cross, or those who recruit and exploit unaccompanied Pashto minors for the Mafia and other shady networks? The answer, in abstraction, is of course because I am resisting the capitalist system which has constructed the ‘need’ for these roles and these inequalities. In ‘So you think you’re an Anti-racist?’, Gorski describes racism as:

“an institutional structure that provides access and opportunity to some at the expense of others”.

This means that anyone who has a passport is complicit in maintaining and justifying the border regime.

*“White people are privileged by racism; even if we aren’t consciously contributing to it. Since we reap the benefits, we also hold the responsibility to challenge the system that benefits us”.*¹

Anyone who has spent time doing solidarity work in Calais will be familiar with the sense of disempowerment and injustice when you pass through the border freely back to Dover. That moment when we surrender our identity

¹ www.edchange.org/handouts/paradigmshifts_race.pdf

and show our papers, our privilege makes itself manifest.

Demands to an end to immigration prisons (and all prisons) should not be ideals that anarchists quote *ad nauseum* in social centres and autonomous spaces. They have a practical implementation. The politics of solidarity are confusing, conflicting, and endlessly shifting. As I type this I am aware that despite talking of accessibility, of some attempt to break down issues connected to privilege, to working transnationally and across difference, I am creating yet another wordy text that will no doubt sit gathering dust in anarchist social spaces across the country. Despite this it's important we develop these perspectives. These are random thoughts that may have a resonance for some, may antagonise others. They might bore those familiar with the arguments, for others, they might be a wealth of new information. Who knows!

Edges and borders

One of the aims of this booklet was to highlight the need for practical action, and to move concepts such as mutual aid and practical solidarity into more mainstream places of organising, by identifying allies and strengthening networks transnationally and politically. To use a permaculture principle, it is about exploring possibilities of the 'edge' of valuing the marginal, and exploring the potential for cultivation and development that can occur on the borders between overlapping political spheres.

As with many anarchist projects, we can have moments of growth, and increased resilience, but rarely do we match the might of the state, or maintain momentum for considerable periods of time. This article seeks to highlight some of the barriers to resistance, to show how we can use anarchist principles to combat the tools of the state, and to critique concepts based on false unity. The aim is not to provide a devastating new political theory, rather, to show some current examples of important political concepts and practical community organising. Making the connections between the overlapping circles means acknowledging the relationship between capitalism and racism, the failings of anti-fascism, and the potential in current crises to promote community organising. These arguments have been heard since the Industrial Revolution and, at times, it can seem an overwhelming maze of issues, impossible to find your way.

In 1936 Durruti famously declared: "*Forward against fascism, twin brother of*

capitalism! Neither one can be discussed, they must be destroyed". The twin towers of these two -isms continue to support each other today, in overt forms in the case of the EDL, and in more insidious ways, such as the scapegoating of large families and those with disabilities in the spending cuts. At the time of writing this, I felt lost; confused by the endless interconnected nature of the mess that is our current system. This quote for me is important because it highlights the interconnected nature of nationalism and economics (if I was Durruti; I would have added patriarchy in there too. But for all his brilliance, I'm gonna make a wild suggestion that maybe he wasn't that hot on gender politics!?! Discuss.)

A good friend said the first draft of this article was "A trip through a bunch of fucked-up politics which are really unclear how to respond to." Hopefully this is an improvement! Hopefully it shows some practical ways to resist.

Gender, sexuality, identity



"Freedom of movement for all" means engaging with the politics of gender, of sexual orientation, of racism, of economics. In the UK, asylum cases based on gender identification and sexual orientation have been theoretically granted since 1999. In 2009, 73% of all asylum claims made in the UK were denied at the initial decision-making stage. However, in claims made by lesbians and gay men analysed by the UK Lesbian Gay

Immigration Group, a staggering 98-99% were rejected at this initial stage. This figure does not include trans people, who if included, would make the statistics worse.

In the UK people from the No Borders network have campaigned to make the sex trade visible, to act in solidarity with migrant sex workers to show the range of inequalities and dangers they face, remove the stigma attached to sex work and debunk myths around trafficking which ultimately amount to anti-migration legislation. As Nathalie Rothschild has argued, "Who says sex workers want to be 'saved'?"² A Liberal response to this issue is built on a misplaced sense of benevolence, where

² *More evidence that sex-trafficking is a myth*, Natalie Rothschild, 2009.

“migrants tend to become subjects of concern for campaigners only when they enter the sex industry, despite the fact that they can earn significantly more through that line of work than they would as domestic workers or seasonal agricultural workers for instance”.

As thousands of asylum seekers have found to their peril, failure to comply with the rigorous bureaucracy enforced by the UK Border Agency can have fatal results. For many seeking asylum on the basis of gender or sexuality, an analysis of reasons stated included for refusal commonly featured a conflict between the ‘operation guidance notes’ of country of origin and relocation, and a misguided assumption that internal relocation within the individuals country of origin would be sufficient. Other commonly cited reasons for refusal are a lack of understanding as to what constitutes a claim based on gender or sexuality (and the complex web of persecutions this creates) and also a fear of making sexual orientation or gender the central reason for asylum claims due to the stigma attached.

The Greater London Authority claims there are an estimated 618,000 undocumented or ‘irregular’ migrants living in the UK, about two-thirds of whom have been in the UK for five years or more³. In ‘Multiculturalism and Identity Politics’,⁴ the Independent Working Class Association argued that class struggle has been abandoned by the left who instead have focused on gender, sexuality and nationality. In their critique of ‘identity politics’ they argue that it fails to account for economic and societal power, instead calling for a class-based analysis which rejects preconceptions and stereotypes, but builds instead on community resilience.

“We have a responsibility to challenge backward notions about the immutability of peoples’ identities and to fight for a vision of a society where the majority of ordinary working people, regardless of their ethnic, religious or social background, can fulfil their aspirations”.

As with many aspects of privilege and oppression, someone is not just a ‘migrant’, they are a lover, they are gendered in some way, they are human. Identity has many layers, which cannot be distilled into neat categories. It is messy, complex, and transient. Migration management will always fail

³ *Economic impact on the London and UK economy of an earned regularisation of irregular migrants to the UK*, London School of Economics on behalf of the GLA. www.lse.ac.uk/collections/LSELondon/pdf/irregular%20migrants%20full%20report.pdf

⁴ *Multiculturalism & Identity Politics*, IWCA, www.iwca.info/?p=10146

because it cannot account for these complexities. One form of persecution is all too often prioritised over another, and the system cannot engage with a class analysis because this is the root of its power: segregation and domination.

It is those socialised as women who are targeted by population controls. These women often remain hidden when in this country, until, as current rhetoric shows, they are targeted for having too many children, for being a “drain on the economy”, accused of not working, but then denied the basic access to education required to get work. Even the IOM (International Organisation for Migration) acknowledges gender division as having a huge impact on female migrants in their country of origin and country of destination (to use migration management speak), never mind the repression that occurs on the long, traumatic and often dangerous journeys that are made and the years of fear, bureaucracy, trauma and illness that often begin on arrival at the country of destination.

Identity politics are important, but not in isolation. This is where the strength of an anarchist response to issues connected to migration is important. As anyone who has read a variation on a safer spaces policy in an autonomous space will know, it's not enough to read without action, and it's not enough to reject one form of oppression whilst enforcing others. We must reject all. In “The Sexual Politics of Meat”, Carol J. Adams highlights how capitalism links oppressions and intensifies them, for example in the simultaneous exploitation of women and animals. For Adams, identity politics (specifically feminism) are essential in recognising the causes and consequences of domination:

“Dominance functions best in a culture of disconnections and fragmentations. Feminism recognises connections”.

Privilege, as identity, is shifting, relative and complex. It is often those who identify as male who shout the loudest for an increased emphasis on class analysis as 'the' struggle, leading to a dismissal of 'identity politics'. However, the complexity of the structures which manufacture and maintain ‘absent referents’ (those hidden by the -isms of nationalism, capitalism and sexism) should not be so easily dismissed. Civil rights activists such as Dick Gregory have condemned the slaughterhouse and the ghetto in the same breath, showing how the existence of one reinforces the other. This is not merely about identity. It is about a systematic dismantling of the mechanisms of capitalism.

Integration as oppression?

The threat of climate change, used by groups on both the left and the right to promote specific ideologies, practices and responses, and the issue of climate-induced migration, as other articles printed here show, becomes an unavoidable topic. The right continue to propagandise about migration, whilst the liberal left continue to call for multiculturalism and integration. But where does an anarchist critique fit into this discourse? Wary of a dialogue based on 'good' and 'bad' migrants, of the un/worthy of the racist distinctions that will always perpetuate inequalities and rely on hierarchical implementation, how can anarchist alternatives be promoted as a response?

The Refugee Council and many NGO's have a long history of promoting 'integration', with little or no engagement with it as a political position, and this year's national Refugee Week was no exception. The 'worth' of migrants and specific cultural groups seemed to be valued only through tokenistic arts events. The recurring questions are not about what leads individuals to migrate, but what can migrants bring to the UK, and how can their process of assimilation into the UK be facilitated? Those able to pay large sums for higher education are welcomed, while those without are told they lack the will to integrate.

The Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act, passed in 2009, undermines any pretence of commitment to integration by popularising the view that new migrants pose a threat to shared values, particularly via its requirement that citizenship be 'earned'. The law requires a lengthy residence of 'probationary citizenship', which can be reduced if candidates engage in 'active citizenship', meaning people have incentives to work voluntarily. In this process, those who are unable to 'volunteer' due to a variety of reasons (family, employment, illness, trauma, lack of education) are perceived as somehow unworthy. As with 'voluntary returns', the system of removal implemented and aggressively promoted by organisations like the IOM, migrants are expected to be grateful for these 'opportunities'.

Earlier this year, Refugee Migrant Justice, the legal aid service for migrants to the UK was forced into administration by the Legal Services Commission. 10,000 asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants were left without legal assistance, including almost 900 children. Every day growing numbers are being forced to either try to find solicitors themselves, or try to make sense of the bureaucratic maze that is the UK asylum system by themselves. The

consequences of this maze are all too real, with detention, snatch squads, deportation or 'voluntary' returns ever present in the minds of many.

As a report made by the Institute of Race Relations has argued,

*"Integration is endlessly discussed as a problem of 'minority cultures', even as structural discrimination, in employment, education and in the marginalised inner cities and banlieues, grows. We have strong anti-discrimination laws, we are told. But the fact that the official anti-discrimination bureaux are losing the trust of the very people they are meant to serve, is denied."*⁵

This is a Europe where the National Action Plans Against Racism, promised after the 2001 UN Durban World Conference Against Racism, have long been abandoned, and in some countries were never implemented. This is a major challenge for those in the No Borders network to consider; where does it situate itself in this debate? Will regional groups work in connection with migrant support services to change this approach, or will they refuse to engage? In Bristol, this dialogue with different groups has begun but there are no answers yet.

Failings of the left and right?

So, to use a phrase that doesn't do the extent of the current crisis justice, how can anarchists make the best of a bad situation? If there is a general failing by groups on the left to promote freedom of movement and mutual aid, how can this be rectified?

Liberal anti-fascism has done little to dissuade the fear of the stranger, to engage with class struggle as a topic. Its attempts to overly simplify the far right by hysterically labelling all groups "Nazis" have been successful in mobilising within a specific (largely Socialist) demographic without leading to any level of social change. It has failed to counter right wing propaganda. As Kieron Farrow has argued⁶, calls from the liberal left to vote for any party that

⁵ *Not integration but civil rights*, Institute of Race Relations, 2010.
www.irr.org.uk/2010/july/ha000029.html

⁶ *Anti-fascism isn't working*, Kieron Farrow, Red Pepper, 2009.
www.redpepper.org.uk/Anti-fascism-isn-t-working

See also responses at *Filling the Vacuum*, IWCA, www.iwca.info/?p=10143 and
www.freedompress.org.uk/news/2009/10/24/give-up-anti-fascism-an-anarchist-response/

will keep out the BNP have done little to challenge the conditions which make them an attractive proposition in the first place, and fail to work in solidarity with potential voters, obscuring as they do, the real causes behind fascist and racist rhetoric, transforming the struggle against nationalism and capitalism into a struggle against specific figures within the far right who are up for election.

As anarchists we reject the language of rights and of parliamentary democracy as 'gifts' from the state, dependent on a system of exclusion and an acceptance of inequalities and power. In the language of rights, migration is formulated in terms of value, of capital - both cultural and financial. Certain cultures are celebrated by the left, whilst economic migrants are discredited, undervalued, and hidden. This does little to promote a culture of understanding and solidarity. Rather, it can only contribute to uncertainty and xenophobia, which facilitates the emergence and growth of right wing groups, and, in reaction to this, the identity politics of the left.

The fear of the unknown, be it the BNP or the impact of climate change, often seems to lead people into giving up on their political positions. If the choice is climate chaos or authoritarianism, then how can you argue? If it's the BNP, or the Greens, only the most idealistic anarchist would grimly cling to concepts such as autonomy and consensus as the only possible solutions?! So what are the alternatives?

Street confrontation and a dogmatic determination to maintain a 'no platform' approach to fascist groups clearly have limited appeal, and are all too often only employed by a specific demographic of people. As Farrow has highlighted, the leftist project of voting for "anyone but the BNP" parliamentary politics has damaged anti-fascism, but where is the anarchist alternative? If the only 'accessible' alternative is Searchlight, the UAF, or other Socialist-led projects then how will an anarchist response ever be promoted?

In Bristol, a coalition of groups formed ahead of the last general election. The local groups of Antifa, No Borders, Industrial Workers of the World, Anarchist Black Cross, Anarchist Federation, Bookfair Collective and East Bristol Debtors Alliance, joined together to work in areas of Bristol and Avonmouth traditionally targeted by the right wing. 10,000 flyers were delivered door to door and stalls in a variety of locations were organised. The group continues to do street stalls in areas such as Barton Hill (where an anti-mosque campaign is mounting), organising demonstrations and workshops aimed at promoting

community responses to threats from the right; be it fascist groups, the 'spending review' or politicians locally seeking to scapegoat groups such as the Roma for 'anti-social behaviour'. The network combines accessible forms of resistance to racism and capitalism, with ongoing monitoring, disruption and mobilising against fascist groups.



As with many anarchist projects, Bristol Resistance is a project that fluctuates in terms of input, capacity and popularity. Without the deadline of the general election, it has been hard to maintain momentum, but there is a sense from all involved that it is an important vehicle for highlighting the interconnectedness of social struggle, working in solidarity with a wide range of groups, and resisting oppression. As the pre-election flyer says:

“Our real enemies are the bosses and politicians, not the asylum seekers and migrant workers. We mustn't allow ourselves to fall for their divide-and-rule tactics - the working class must stand and act together if we're to change this rotten system and improve living conditions for all”.

“Sanctuary” and resistance

The specific motivations for the aggressive lies promoted by the right often go unchallenged by the left, lost in a vague celebration of individualism, where those 'worthy' of pity, charity, and of sanctuary are tolerated and protected by receiving nation states and benevolent groups. Those displaced by climatic changes may become worthy of protection, but economic migrants and sex workers are not. Those fleeing political persecution are valid, but migrants seeking asylum based on their sexuality are hidden. The City of Sanctuary movement in the UK began in Sheffield in the north of England in 2005 and began with a group of people organising a series of local community meetings to garner support for the idea, with local businesses, organisations and community groups being asked to support a resolution stating that they, “Welcome asylum seekers and refugees”. Since then, the model has been implemented in several cities, often so-called ‘dispersal’ cities which have been growing since 1999 when the UKBA decided to forcibly relocate thousands of asylum seekers to areas of cheaper corporate housing. It is noticeable that

several of these cities, e.g. Bolton and Leeds, have opted out of the City of Sanctuary programme. “Urban Displacement,” a report on the movement said,

*“Cities can never offer sanctuary in its fullest sense until there is a shift in government policy away from placing many individuals, including children, in detention, deporting others back to repressive regimes, and consigning some to destitution on Britain’s streets”.*⁷

Until work is done to engage with issues such as inequality and precarity within cities, the concept of sanctuary for anyone, wherever they hail from, will always be tokenistic.

The City of Sanctuary debate is a good example of the need for pragmatism when it comes to the realities of migration policies. In the US it cannot be denied that in areas where repression has had many fatal consequences, the movement has had some positive impacts, for example enabling local law enforcers to become more lenient on checking immigration status. From an anarchist perspective, the answer can never lie in 'sanctuary', or in benevolence and tolerance, it must come with an opening of the borders, of autonomy, of free movement. The inequalities that drive migration, the journeys people make, and the so-called 'triple grip' of detention, destitution and threat of deportation, must all be confronted. This does not mean isolating ourselves in a ghetto until some mythical revolution brings about an opening of the borders, but it does require constant vigilance when dealing with the charitable 'solutions' promoted by the liberal left through humanitarian projects such as City of Sanctuary, and investigating the effects not only on those migrating to this city, but those already living here.

In Bristol as with many cities, an uneasy dialogue has begun between various migrant support services, which No Borders has been seeking to engage with, attempting to build local networks to share information about snatch squads and deportations, critique and create responses to policy and initiatives, and promote general solidarity work.

⁷ www.fmreview.org/urban-displacement/FMR34/46-47.pdf

“Solidarity means attack”

Dignity, autonomy, freedom. Big words, with practical implementation. A piece of graffiti I recently saw stated “solidarity means attack”. Just as current models of anti-fascism are failing, so do the leftist projects of integration and sanctuary. Those in power pay lip service to change whilst fanning the fires of racism, simultaneously monitoring and creating threats and spectacles inside and outside the UK borders. Attack means street confrontation, physically resisting dawn raids, snatch squads and anti-fascist organising, but it also means vigilance: it means monitoring and grass roots organising. Attack means choosing your battles, finding allies and building movements. Sustainable attack means promoting autonomy, and mutual aid. It means looking out for each other, being pragmatic and listening to critiques in order to build resilient movements and trust.

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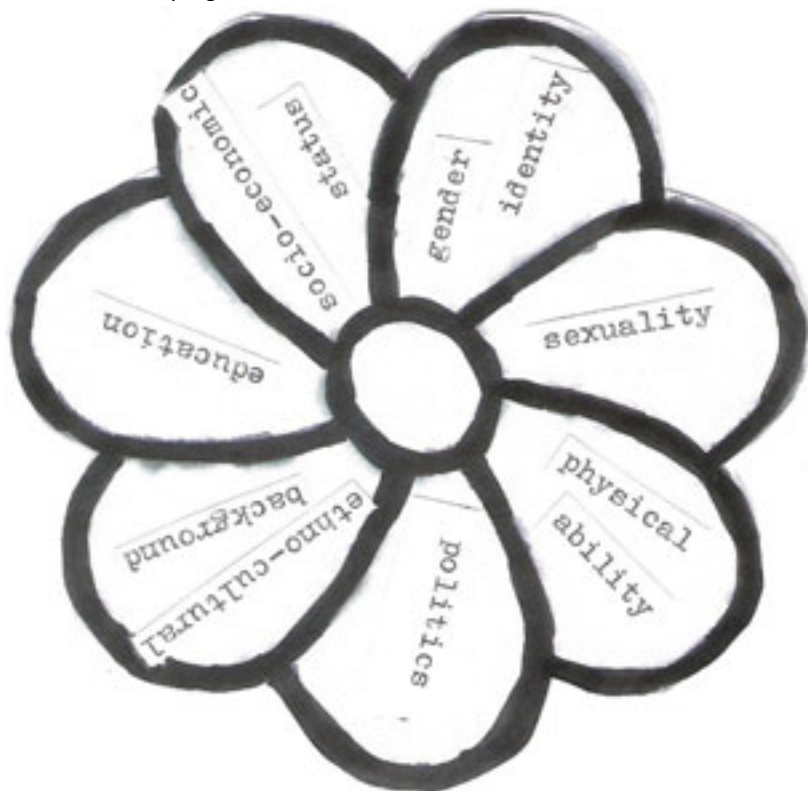


image discovered with other interesting stuff at asen.pbworks.com/Privilege-Flower

The social barriers to sustainability

bob hughes

To avert climate change, we must outlaw inequality and open the borders.

The modern global economy doesn't just run on fossil fuels; above all, it runs on inequality: the principle that some people are worth more than others, while yet others are worthless. And an ever-growing mountain of evidence indicts inequality as the real driving force behind all the harms, and more, that have finally led to climate change. A world without inequality is not just desirable, it is necessary, and urgently. And it can be achieved. Outlaw inequality, and the emissions will fall away, as the pressure of the market's hidden foot begins to ease off the accelerator.

Inequality has recently ceased to be "just" a moral issue: hard data are appearing, in ever greater abundance and coherence, on its material effects. The best-known of these, so far, are its health-effects within more-developed countries (not between countries – but we will come to that). Life in an unequal country, or region, is shorter and nastier than life in a more-equal one. In the USA (the world's most unequal rich country), being among the least wealthy 20% takes 14 years off your life and diminishes its quality in ways that go too deep and wide to quantify. In Britain the penalty for being in that lower fifth is 7.5 years. In Oxford the penalty is 5.5 years. And it affects everyone: even the rich die slightly younger, and lead slightly worse lives, in highly-unequal USA and UK than in more-equal Sweden or Japan.

Knowing this means that anyone who tolerates inequality must now accept full responsibility for other people's misery, illness and early death.¹ What is less widely discussed, so far, is the environmental cost of all this inequality. Here are some indicative findings:

¹ See Kate Pickett and Richard Wilkinson *"The Spirit Level: why more-equal societies almost always do better"*, 2009; Richard Wilkinson *"The Impact of Inequality"*, 2005; *"Inequalities Are Unhealthy"*, Vicente Navarro; Monthly Review Vol. 56, No. 2; Oxford data from NHS Health Profile for Oxford, 2006.

- Inequalities are far more costly, in environmental terms, than income-differences alone might predict. For example an Oxford University study in 2006 found that 61 per cent of all travel emissions came from individuals in the top 20 per cent (those earning £40,000 a year or more), while only 1 per cent of emissions came from those in the bottom 20 per cent (with incomes up to £10,000).² Sheffield University's Danny Dorling reckons that:

*it is almost certainly an underestimate to claim that the richest tenth of the world's population have a greater negative environmental impact than all the rest put together. [...] And, of the richest 10th of the world's population, the richest 10th consume more, even than the other half a billion or so affluent.*³

his extraordinarily disproportionate impact is explained not by their wealth per se, but their wealth relative to the rest of the population. The whole idea of “wealth” becomes disastrously skewed in an unequal society, as we will see below.

- Rich countries generally have far greater ecological impacts than do poorer ones – but a country's impact may not relate so much to its wealth, as to its wealth-inequality. The WWF's 2008 Living Planet Report showed that the two countries with the greatest per-capita ecological impact were the United Arab Emirates and the USA, with ecological footprints, respectively, of 9.5 and 9.4 global hectares (Gha) per citizen in 2005, compared to a sustainable footprint of just 2.1 GHa. If wealth is defined in terms of human wellbeing and development, then this need not carry any ecological price at all, as shown by highly egalitarian Cuba, which had a footprint of just 1.8 Gha, and is even regenerating forests that were destroyed in the earliest days of imperialism. In 2006, Cuba was the only country to achieve both sustainability, and good-quality lives for its people (as measured by the UN's Human Development Index – HDI – included in the WWF's 2006 report). Some countries that are almost as wealthy in crude terms as the UAE and USA, but which are more equal, have nowhere near the ecological impact. Rich nations are deceptive units of comparison because they do less and less productive work, especially

² Travelling in the right direction: lessening our impact on the environment; Brand, Preston and Boardman (2006).

³ Danny Dorling, personal communication 28/9/2007, citing Worldmapper.org and WWF Living Planet Report data. Also “*Injustice: why social inequality persists*”, Danny Dorling, April 2010.

the dirty work, within their own borders. But even so, a striking relationship is observable.

- In the USA, a strong relationship has been established between inequality and environmental degradation. A 1999 study by James K. Boyce at the University of Massachusetts found that more-unequal states (like Tennessee, Alabama and Mississippi)⁴ had several times more, and worse, pollution, and weaker environmental laws, than more-equal states (like Minnesota, Maine and Wisconsin)⁴. These are also the states where other ill effects of inequality are most prevalent: from exposure to crime, to infant mortality, to suicide, to the chances of being incarcerated, to the chances of being washed out of your home by a passing hurricane.

- Human impact grows when inequality grows, globally and within nations.⁵ IPCC figures show that atmospheric CO₂ equivalents increased more than twice as fast during 1995-2004 (the first ten years of the World Trade Organisation's existence, when the brakes really came off neo-liberal growth and world-wide inequality soared) as during 1970-1994.

- The same pattern even appears in the archaeological and historical record. The first evidence of environmental degradation due to human activity is associated not with agriculture as such (as was widely assumed) but with the emergence some thousands of years later of intensely unequal, aristocratic societies in the Eastern Mediterranean around 5,000 years ago. The same sites also yield evidence of the human health problems associated with inequality: "the ordinary people have five times more dental lesions than their ruler and are up to 4 percent shorter. An average Bronze Age male farmer from the eastern Mediterranean would stand 167cm (five feet six inches); 6 cm shorter than his ruler and 10cm shorter than his hunting ancestors".⁶ This pattern of inequality, depletion of natural resources and human immiseration is the leitmotif of early-modern European history, reflecting the course of feudalism,

⁴ James K. Boyce: *"Is inequality bad for the environment and bad for your health?"*; *DifferenTakes* 8, Spring 2001; Population and Development Program at Hampshire College, Amherst.

⁵ The rate of growth of CO₂-equivalent emissions was much higher during the recent 10-year period of 1995-2004 (0.92 GtCO₂ - equivalent per year) than during the previous period of 1970-1994 (0.43 GtCO₂ - equivalent per year); *Climate Change 2007: Synthesis Report*, IPCC

⁶ Martin Jones; *"Feast: why humans share food"*, p. 248.

helping explain the rise of capitalism itself in Northern Italy and the Low Countries, and culminating in the spectacular exodus of the European poor to the Americas and Australasia in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.⁷ By 1914, the average British conscript was 5 inches (12.7 cm) shorter than his officer.⁸ Europeans have only regained their hunter-gatherer stature in the last two or three generations – but only thanks to cheap fossil fuels and intensified exploitation of the rest of the world.

This knowledge is new, and political dynamite for anyone with the courage to use it. The epidemiological studies (by the likes of Michael Marmot and Richard Wilkinson) only began in earnest in the 1970s; the archaeological evidence only began to emerge in the 1980s, so it is little wonder if the penny has taken a little while to drop among the broader community – especially when one reflects on how deeply and forcefully we have all been acculturated, over scores of generations, to accept inequality (with even militant trades unions setting their sights no higher than retention of relatively low-paid, unpleasant jobs, instead of demanding control of the work by workers themselves, and a fair share of the vast wealth produced).

How does this damage happen?

Inequality does its work in two ways – first, by the “emulative consumption” described more than a hundred years ago by Thorstein Veblen in his *Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899 – not to mention by Adam Smith himself in 1759, in his *Theory of the Moral Sentiments*). In a unequal world, says Veblen, life becomes above all a battle for respect and to avoid “invidious comparisons”; “everyday life is an unremitting demonstration of the ability to pay”. Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett chart in detail its effects on health and to some extent on the environment in their recent book *The Spirit Level: why more equal societies*

⁷ The phenomenon of land-exhaustion in Europe since the tenth century is described and analysed by (e.g.) Fernand Braudel “*Civilization and Capitalism 15th – 18th Century*” (1981); Immanuel Wallerstein “*The modern world system*” (1974); Catharina Lis and Hugo Soly, “*Poverty and capitalism in preindustrial Europe*” (1979). Bob Sutcliffe has estimated that: “*from the early nineteenth century to the 1920s, more than 60 million Europeans migrated to America and Australasia, of whom 5.7 million went to Argentina, 5.6 million to Brazil, 6.6 million to Canada, and 36 million to the United States.*” (quoted by Teresa Hayter in “*Open Borders: the case against immigration controls*”, Pluto 2001).

⁸ Andrew Marr, “*A History of Modern Britain*”, Macmillan 2009.

almost always do better (2009). Le Monde's environmental editor, Hervé Kempf, delivers a blistering account of it in *How the Rich are Destroying the Earth* (2008), and draws links between rising inequality and state violence and erosion of democratic rights. The rich not only spur each other on in their extraordinary feats of overconsumption, but also transform consumption all the way down the social pecking-order, turning whole societies into high-performance planet-trashing machines, as everyone is drawn into an intensifying struggle for ever-more fragile respect (and self-respect): from the billionaire who needs apartments in London, Paris and New York and a yacht with a helipad just to keep face with his peers; to the working-class families that must spend more than they can afford on a car that makes them look wealthier than they are, lest they be seen as "losers"; to their children, terrified of the scorn awaiting them should they turn up to school in the wrong trainers.

Positional Consumption: private goods become public bads. The Link between global and local inequality.

Whereas emulative consumption is driven by frail human psychology, "positional consumption" is 100% material: forced on us by factors that physically shape our lives. It was first described by British economist Fred Hirsch in *Social Limits to Growth* (1977). "Positional goods" are ones whose value is reduced, or which cease to be luxuries and become necessities, if others have them too. Hirsch's analogy is standing at a football match to get a better view; if everybody does it, nobody is any better off. Country cottages and "unspoiled Greek islands" are classic positional goods, whose pursuit blights entire countries with terrifying speed. With private cars, positionality has become a central fact of life: once enough people are using them, they become obligatory; and anyone who wants to continue leading a "normal life" must find the money to play a game whose ante is continuously being raised. Likewise private schools and private healthcare: the more others use them, the more (and the more urgent) reason there is for you to use them too, or be left behind. Which is very good for GNP (the whole neoliberal project can be seen as one of turning as many goods as possible into positional goods) but of diminishing benefit to anyone or anything else. As Sheffield University's Danny Dorling has observed, the English city of Bristol spends vast more money on secondary education than does similar-sized Sheffield, because it has an extraordinary number of private secondary schools. Sheffield has hardly any.

Yet both cities send almost identical numbers of children to university.

Actually, to call these things “private” is misleading: they have massive public impacts. A “private estate” dominates and diminishes the lives of everyone it excludes, or who even tries to conduct their life in its vicinity. Private helicopters intrude on the lives of millions (and especially in hotspots of inequality like Sao Paulo, which has more private helicopters than Manhattan). These things are unlike genuinely private goods (such as a meal, decent clothing, or a good night’s sleep, whose enjoyment affects only the person enjoying them).

Hirsch observes that even good A-levels are “positional goods” when the supply of nice jobs (doctor, lawyer etc.) is restricted: having straight As becomes no longer adequate; A-stars are needed, plus interesting extra-curricular accomplishments. And the education that provides these good things becomes positional, especially when is dominated by an elite, private sector. Hence the Bristol taxi-driver who works double shifts from the time his daughter is two years old, to get her into and through one of that city’s five elite, private-sector all-girls schools – adding 2 extra tonnes of CO₂ to the atmosphere every year⁹, and wearing himself out. He is not necessarily driven by crude ambition, but by fear for his daughter if she has to go the disparaged, local, state secondary school.

But being a doctor should not be a prize for which people fight each other: the more good doctors, the better, surely, and this is the approach taken in Cuba. There, doctors come to you rather than you to them. Their carbon footprints are about the same size as everyone else’s. They are not a species of aristocracy, as elsewhere, yet the profession still has no difficulty attracting recruits – and Cuba achieves almost the same health outcomes as the USA, for one twentieth of the expenditure. (Which while bad for GNP is good for the planet).

Housing is possibly the most ridiculous positional “good” of all. As Danny Dorling puts it: “In a more unequal society, everyone is less free to choose

⁹ Calculation based on a taxi driver using 10 litres of diesel/shift, producing 7.15 kg of Carbon. If he does this 5 days/week for 10 years (260 days/year = 2,600 days) he produces 2600*7.15 = 18,590 kg of carbon (18.59 tonnes) into the atmosphere. Carbon figures from www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200203/cmselect/cmenvfru/929/3091706.htm

where they live”¹⁰. His 2007 Joseph Rowntree Foundation study *Poverty, Wealth and Place in Britain, 1968 to 2005* showed how hard the “exclusive rich” must now compete for diminishing numbers of desirable locations and to avoid undesirable ones, at huge and ramified energy cost throughout society: extra hours must be worked to secure the same amount of housing (two salaries instead of one); extra journeys must be made as “islands” of respectability and safety become smaller and more isolated. As the despised interstices of respectable society atrophy and become unproductive, more and more resources are sucked in from beyond the national borders.

Hence foreign wars, intensified exploitation and corruption of resource-blighted countries, and ever stiffer, more militarised national borders. Parallels can be drawn between NATO’s beleaguered garrisons in Afghanistan, and Britain’s wealthiest 1%: both groups need increasingly to travel by helicopter. (And in Sao Paulo, the risk of kidnap makes the helicopter almost compulsory).

Yet it is easy to see how housing becomes a public good if no house is allowed to be built that does not enrich its surroundings. This is how houses were once built (and the rich have snaffled most of the surviving specimens as charming rural hideaways). Such houses could be built again, starting tomorrow. But not by any market, only by people.

Instead, in the unequal countries (and even more so, on this increasingly unequal planet), work of all kinds has been relocated, increasingly, to suit the rich.

Within the national borders, this means more time must be spent in cars, a need for more reliable and safer cars, leading for example to a 20% increase in the size of automobiles in the USA since 1985¹¹; plus a vast increase in their numbers and a tripling of commuting time between 1983 and 2003. For an illustration of how this happens in the UK, see Appendix 2.

Globally it means more migration: people must live, and to help them do that the bravest and ablest embark on trials and journeys that out-Odyssey Odysseus a million times over, every single day, wherever there are borders between rich and poor. Internationally there are thought to be about 300

¹⁰ Danny Dorling, “*The trouble with moving upmarket*”, Guardian 18th July 2007.

¹¹ “*Falling Behind: how rising inequality harms the middle class*”, Richard Frank, University of California Press 2007. The weight of a Honda Accord (an average car) increased from 2500 pounds in 1985 to 3200 pounds in 2007.

million of them (and this does not include the hundreds of millions of 'internal' migrants, especially within China). They are the "dark matter" of the neo-liberal universe, without which no budget would ever balance; its "ragged-trouserred philanthropists", working almost for nothing (and often actually for nothing), doing the work the rich countries' own paupers have been priced out of by the crippling costs of living. There are three-quarters of a million illegalised migrants in Britain alone, trapped here to a greater or lesser extent by the draconian anti-immigrant laws that made them illegal, and which have led to a lucrative revival throughout the UK of slavery, debt-bondage and death through overwork¹² – not to mention the increasingly acceptable racism that keeps the whole system going.

An Answer: prioritize public goods; redefine "private wealth"; out law inequality and scrap migration controls.

In Hirsch's analysis, positionality supersedes older and more limited notions of private and public wealth, and embraces Ruskin's useful but hitherto ignored idea of "illth".¹³ The opposite of a positional good might be either a public good, which enriches everyone's life, whoever it belongs to, or a private good, whose consumption is an entirely private matter, affecting nobody else. Warm clothes, decent food, leisure, creative activities and personal relationships come into that category, but most of what we currently call "private wealth" certainly does not (see above). The industrial "private sector" generally is anything but. And as for the private press and privately-owned media, these are nothing less than assaults on the public realm by private interests intent on controlling it.

Clean water, a beautiful garden, a good sense of humour, or any skill you like to name, are or could be public goods. Public transport, housing, libraries, theatres, cafés, parks and schools of all kinds are clearly public goods – and the planet and its people need more of them. But there has never been an economic policy informed by this concept of maximising public good while

¹² For example as described by Hsiao-Hung Pai in *Chinese Whispers: the true story behind Britain's hidden army of labour*, Penguin 2008. See also Rahila Gupta: *Enslaved: the new British slavery*, Portobello 2007; and "When I hear of girls working in London who swallow acid, I know it could have been me", Dan McDougall, *The Guardian*, 24 May 2009.

¹³ Ruskin developed this idea in his influential essay, *Unto this last*, 1860.

eliminating the positional, and we need one now.

Above all we need to reduce inequality because this, ipso facto, means less competitive and less positional consumption – and less of almost any type of morbidity you care to name, from homicide to obesity. We can do this rapidly when we want to: the UK government did it during World War II with great popular support: consumption fell to a fraction of its peacetime level - yet public health made its greatest advance of any period in British history.¹⁴

Central to this project is the removal of all borders that, instead of properly defining zones of responsibility, have come instead to separate an “us” from a “them”. The obscenity of EU and US border fortifications against the world’s poor, and the cancerous network of agencies and commercial interests serving them, is a terminal symptom of the divisive malaise the societies they pretend to protect have harboured for far too long: the divisions of class.

Exposing the link between inequality and climate change could mobilise people who at present are not engaged

- It links personal reality to global reality.
- It speaks to the sense of social justice which we all share, and shows that it is relevant. It appeals to our desire for solidarity and hatred of injustice; not just personal guilt.
- It opens up and informs a wealth of opportunities for action and engagement – wherever the poor are abused by the rich.

Bob Hughes © 12 Jan 2010; contact: bob@dustormagic.net This article was first published at www.dustormagic.net/EqualityWhen/SocialBarriersToSustainability.html See this website for details of two appendices not printed here

Bob Hughes is a founding member of No One Is Illegal (UK), which campaigns for freedom of movement and against immigration controls. He is writing a book, to be published by Pluto Books in 2011, that promotes a "zero tolerance" approach to inequality and considers what an equal world would be like. The book looks particularly at the implications for (and lessons from) advanced technology.

¹⁴ "Development as Freedom", Amartya Sen, OUP, 1999.

Limits? What Limits?

The Difficult 3rd Ethic of Permaculture

tomas remiarz

Permaculture is often seen as no more than a clever way of gardening or ecological farming. But there is a lot more to it than mouldy carpets on allotment sites: it is a design science that can guide everyday and strategic decisions informed by ecosystem understanding. Understanding the natural laws and patterns operating in the world is fundamental to integrating ourselves into the planetary system we depend upon. Such patterns apply not only to bacteria, fungi, plants, animals and the ecosystems they make up. They are equally applicable and discernible in the human realm, in our interactions with each other and the world around us. People are never separate from nature, never operating outside its laws.

At the core of permaculture lies a triple bottom line: the ethics. Two of them, Earth Care and People Care, both seem logical, self-explanatory and are hardly contested within permaculture circles. In contrast, the third ethic is variously expressed as 'Fair Share', 'Limiting Resource Use & Population', 'Limiting Population and Consumption', 'Redistribute Surplus', 'Living within Limits' and so on. Although there is a large overlap between many of these expressions, it leaves this area ill-defined and open to interpretations which are in some cases mutually exclusive.

My feeling is that one reason for this lack of clarity is the embarrassment of many people to use the original phrasing "setting limits to populations", which for many has overtones of genocide, eugenics and discussion about worthy and unworthy lives. It has also aroused antagonism from campaigners for global justice, especially for the rights of migrants.

If in doubt, it is always worth going back to the original text. In the *Permaculture Designers Manual* Mollison sets out the following ethics:

1. Care of the Earth: Provision for all life systems to continue and multiply.
2. Care of People: Provision for people to access those resources necessary to their existence.
3. Setting Limits to populations and consumption: by governing our own needs, we can set resources aside to further the above principles.

This puts the population issue into context and places responsibility on the individual. Unfortunately this subtlety is lost in the abbreviation of the phrase.

The popular rephrasing to 'Fair Shares' was first coined by Danish permaculture pioneer Tony Andersen in the early 1980s. It avoids the uncomfortable discussion about limits, but does not solve it – while abbreviating "redistribute surplus" adequately, it leaves out entirely the crucial concept of limits encapsulated in the third ethic. I believe that 'Fair Shares' arose from a genuine interest in highlighting the social component of permaculture in practice. A part of the success of the phrase is probably how easy it rolls off the tongue – but this advantage disappears in different languages. Precision has been exchanged for easy digestion.

In the phrasing, "Limiting population and consumption" both aspects are given equal weight, and 'consumption' does not distinguish between overall and individual consumption. From an ecological perspective, population is one of (at least) three variables determining overall resource use – number of individuals, individual consumption and efficiency of resource use. The ecological crisis is in its essence one of consumption and pollution (wasted resources).

Living within Limits – the ecological imperative

Understanding limits is fundamental to finding our place in the global ecological web. It may help to look closely at the term 'carrying capacity' which is defined by ecologists as

"the population size of a given species that the environment can sustain in the long term, given the food, habitat, water and other necessities available in the environment".¹

¹ Definitions of carrying capacity differ according to author and subject. Here I go with the wisdom of the crowd, citing www.wikipedia.org

In terms of resource use, carrying capacity is reached when the resources used by one species are equal to the resources available. As soon as resource use approaches carrying capacity, population growth slows down. Whenever it rises above carrying capacity, resources run low and/or the parent ecosystem degrades, with negative long-term effects for the species in question, and of course other species. What usually happens is that this “overshoot” is corrected by death rates rising above birth rates, and the number of individuals sinks back below carrying capacity.

As animals with a choice, we have the understandable desire to live above mere subsistence level. How far above this level we find ourselves varies widely, by birth much more than by choice. Even underprivileged Westerners are likely to have a higher consumption rate than relatively well-off inhabitants of the majority world. Keeping global human resource use below carrying capacity could be termed the *ecological challenge* within permaculture ethics. ‘Ecological Footprinting’ applies this idea by attempting to set an average level of individual resource use that is sustainable, i.e. close to or, better, below carrying capacity. This average footprint is dependent on the total population figure – if the number rises from 7 to 10 billion there will be less to go round between us. And the ‘safe limit’ of variously three, two or one billion people assumes a current average Western lifestyle as the unquestioned baseline.

The individual factor – towards fair shares?

Unlike most other animals, we humans have created complex social hierarchies resulting in large differences in individual consumption. As an overall guide we can state that individual consumption is roughly proportional to position in the global economic hierarchy. On a world-wide scale, the majority of nearly seven billion people are living below the one-planet footprint. Of those who live above it, there is still a massive range from the urban working class in the global North to the Gates, Abramovichs and royals of this world. In fact, the top 1% of the global population consumes easily 1,000 times their ‘Fair Share’ of planetary resources. (Fig.1)

Figure 1: One-planet Footprint

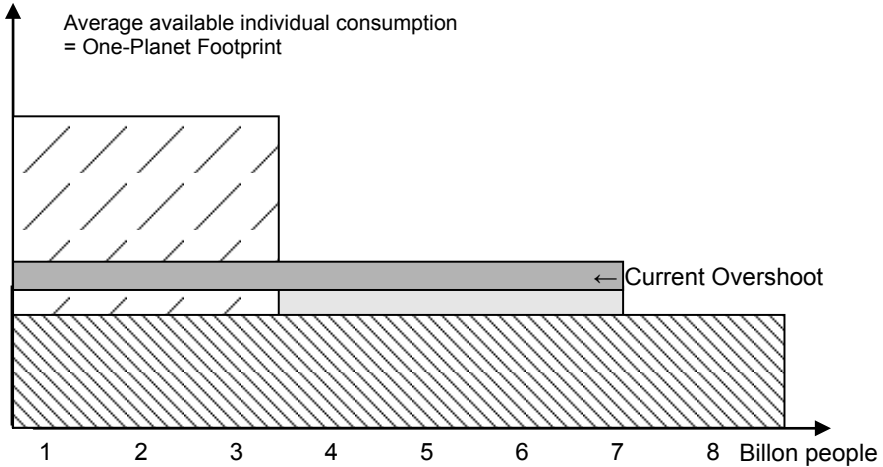
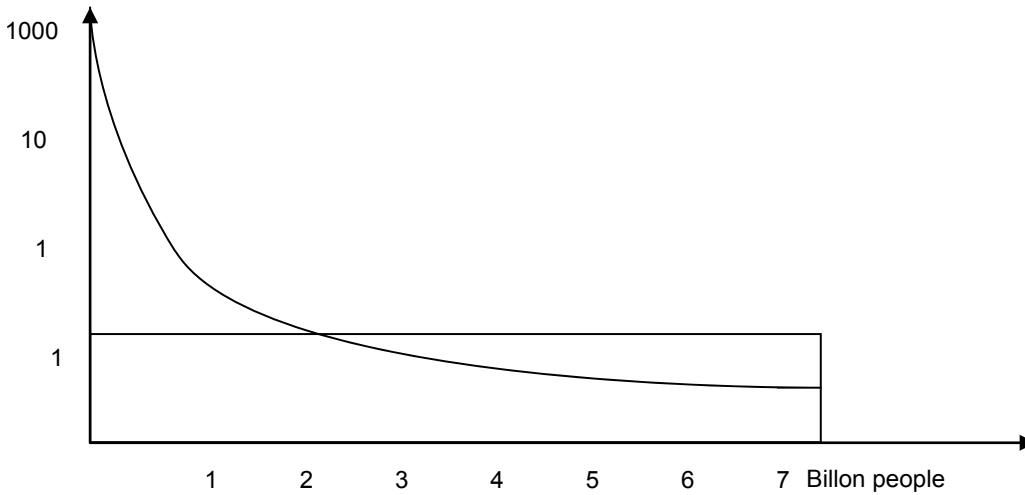


Figure 1: The area within each grey rectangle is equal – reflecting equal total resource use for different numbers of individuals. In other words, the amount of resources available to every one of us depends on how many of us there are. The planet might be able to deal with only two or three billion people living the lifestyle of middle-class Westerners. A world with more of us might still be sustainable, but we all would have to consume fewer resources. As it is, humanity already overshoots its ecological limits by a fair stretch – as symbolised by the dark rectangle. (Please note that this is a simplistic globalised picture, disregarding regional differences in carrying capacity. For more detail on this, see below.

The theoretical one-planet footprint appears again in figure 2, this time overlaid with the actual distribution of individual consumption.

In addition, much of the resource use of the global North is externalised to other regions of the world, damaging or destroying ecosystems the consumers don't directly depend upon and reducing the carrying capacity of those regions in a way indigenous consumption would not. Bluntly put, and in direct contradiction to the tabloid perspective, it's over-consumption in the North, not over-population in the South that's the bigger problem.

Figure 2: Distribution of individual resource use²



All this suggests that:

- a) Reducing population numbers in the global South is completely ineffective, or else advocating mass extinction or genocide at the lower end of consumption. Here are the people who are much less implicated in unsustainable resource use on a global scale.
- b) The greatest scope in reducing resource use lies at the upper end of the scale. Reducing population figures at the top end (let's say, somewhat arbitrarily, above 10 personal footprints) would be much more effective. Due to the power concentrated in this section, this is unlikely to happen without great and violent resistance.
- c) Reducing individual consumption in the high-consumption quarter therefore appears to be the most viable strategy for achieving sustainable levels of global consumption. This of course is naïve and simplistic, as we are alienated producers as well as consumers. Reducing consumption must therefore go hand in hand with recreating patterns of self-empowered, self-directed production and reproduction of society. In other words, 'Fair Shares' as a *social imperative* need to cover resources, labour and surplus.

² This is an extremely crude and imprecise representation.

d) If consumption in the rich quarter is successfully brought down to one-planet level, there is scope for a moderate expansion of the global population and to increase resource use in the lower half. This necessity points to the 'Fair Share' ethic, the *behavioural challenge* contained within permaculture ethics.

A political conclusion may be to demand institution of a *maximum income* as well as a minimum one, which would go a long way to reduce the resource gap between rich and poor. Interestingly, Plaid Cymru included this demand in their campaigning platform for the last general election. This might be an economic mechanism to make one-planet behaviour more likely.

More is different, or how much space is enough?

We have to acknowledge that 'more is different' especially so when talking about population figures. In other words, it's not as simple as saying that double the number of people have half the amounts of resources each available to them. Sheer numbers of us can push out other species and degrade ecosystems, although we know little about where exactly that threshold lies. Pressures on biodiversity, regional water use etc. probably mean that in some parts of the world resource use needs to be below the arithmetical average for one-planet living, whereas other regions (not least Britain) are fortunate to offer above-average conditions for existence. This engenders difficult debates about what a locally acceptable population limit may be, how to redistribute resources to make sustainable living in different areas possible. It also means accepting that 'everybody is equal' only to the extent that everybody's basic needs must be met – how these needs are met has to vary according to regional conditions, and regional cultures are often an expression of these differences. However, intelligent application of ecosystem thinking can increase local carrying capacity, not only for humans but for a wide variety of species, and this may be a good avenue for the redistribution of surplus created elsewhere.

In its original reading 'Fair Shares' is also meant to include fairness between humanity and other species. This leads back to the ecological imperative mentioned earlier – nature has a way of reigning in species that overshoot their carrying capacity at the expense of others. In this reading, fair shares in the short term are no more than self-interested self-preservation in the long term.

As mentioned before, regions vary greatly in their ecosystem carrying capacity. 'Fair Shares' here means responsibility to support more sparing resource use in fragile ecosystems, to accommodate people in more abundant regions, to increase ecosystem stability and abundance where necessary.

The efficiency factor

What does efficiency mean in ecological terms? One measure could be: how much are our human processes integrated into the bio-geochemical processes of the planet? Permaculture as a practical branch of the new biospheric sciences attempts to maximise humanity's integration with the pre-existing natural world and its self-regulatory mechanisms. Our challenge is to become very good at it, to increase our understanding of how ecosystem processes function and how we can usefully contribute to and integrate with them, rather than parasitically exploit them. This is the *design challenge* inherent in all permaculture activity.

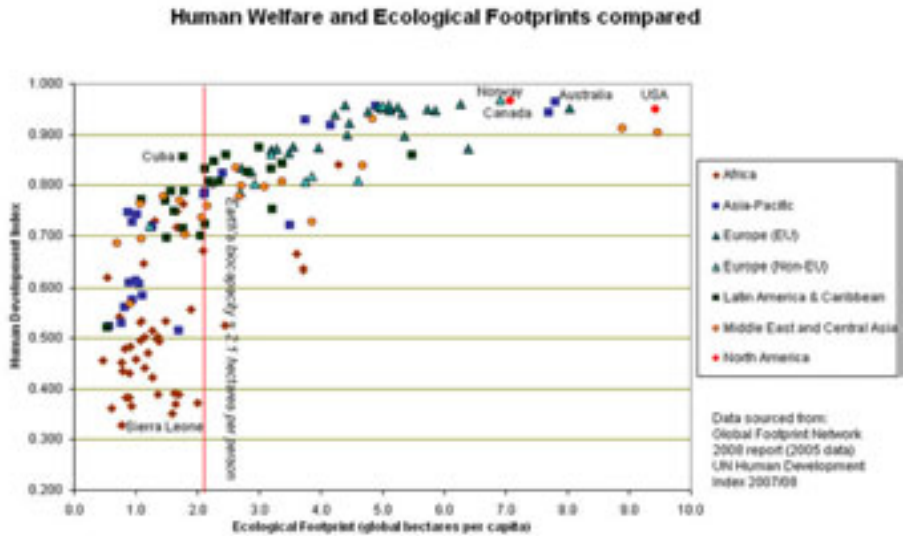
It has been rightly pointed out that increased efficiency alone does not necessarily lower overall resource use, as it may simply free them up to be wasted elsewhere. If we are better integrated into the biospheric processes this may matter somewhat less.

Do people in rich countries have an advantage in terms of efficient resource use, as they have better access to energy saving technology? If they do, this is probably more than balanced by access to energy wasting technologies, as long as there is no strong cultural bias towards energy saving. In our culture, access to efficiency goes hand in hand with access to profligacy.

People Care

The three ethics of 'Living within Limits', 'Earth Care' and 'Fair Share' can thus be directly derived from ecological reasoning. The fourth ethic, People Care, is largely contained within the first three – caring for future generations follows from living within limits, caring for people all over the world from accepting and responding to regional differences, limiting and redistributing consumption patterns. Caring for neighbours, friends, family and self makes ecological sense as we and our immediate associates are the key resource in our lives.

People Care is in essence about the quality of human life. This has much less to do with the amount of resources we use than we are led to believe. Figure 4 makes this clear – countries high up on the ‘human welfare index’ range in their (average per capita) ecological footprint from under one planet's worth to near five planets. Perhaps the most important aspect of life quality is the relationships we allow to flourish among ourselves, and this is a quality hard to quantify and therefore usually absent in the league tables of societies.



The end of the beginning

At the end of this stage of my own exploration I see the three ethics of Earth Care, People Care and Fair Shares underpinned by Living within Limits as the ecological imperative. Contained within them are four challenges:

- The *ecological imperative* of keeping resource use within carrying capacity.
- The *social challenge* of creating equitable patterns of labour, production and the sharing of surplus.
- The *behavioural challenge* to the rich of the world (which probably includes you, the reader) of reducing their consumption.
- The *design challenge* of integrating human activity into the processes of the living earth.

In practice, these ethics can guide strategic and everyday decisions. These ethics are like a compass, guiding us towards a world in which we care for ourselves, other people and future generations, and the earth that sustains us. Any decisions and plans can be tested against them. Without them, permaculture would be no more than clever design, to be used or abused at will.

This has been a very short and incomplete exploration of the subject – other variables such as the age ‘crisis’ (opportunity) in the global North, dropping birth rates and reasons for them have not been discussed here. Some of these subjects are discussed elsewhere in these pages. I don’t claim to have a complete understanding of the whole complexity of this issue. I do have great curiosity for other views on this subject though, so please respond with your own thoughts.

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Voice from the Aliens

The following text is from a leaflet produced by various Jewish trade unions. It was written in the 1890s in response to against a campaign by the Trades Union Congress for legislation to prevent Jewish migration to Britain.

About the Anti-Alien Resolution of the Cardiff Trade Union Congress.

We, the organised Jewish workers of England, taking into consideration the Anti-Alien Resolution, and the uncomplimentary remarks of certain delegates about the Jewish workers specially, issue this leaflet, wherewith we hope to convince our English fellow workers of the untruthfulness, unreasonableness, and want of logic contained in the cry against the foreign worker in general, and against the Jewish worker in particular.

It is, and always has been, the policy of the ruling classes to attribute the sufferings and miseries of the masses (which are natural consequences of class rule and class exploitation) to all sorts of causes except the real ones. The cry against the foreigner is not merely peculiar to England; it is international. Everywhere he is the scapegoat for other's sins. Every class finds in him an enemy. So long as the Anti-Alien sentiment in this country was confined to politicians, wire-pullers and to individual working men, we, the organised aliens, took no heed; but when this ill-founded sentiment has been officially expressed by the organised working men of England, then we believe that it is time to lift our voices and argue the matter out.

It has been proved by great political economists that a working man in a country where machinery is greatly developed produces in a day twice as many commodities as his daily wage enables him to consume.

For one half, he himself is the market; for the rest (the surplus), a market must be found elsewhere. Until the market is found, and the surplus sold off, the worker must remain idle—unemployed.

The greater the producing power, the larger the surplus. The larger the surplus is the longer is the period of unemployment. The larger the number of the unemployed, the keener and fiercer is the competition for work.

Consequently, the harder are the times and the greater the sufferings of the

worker. Who, then, is to be blamed? Surely we cannot blame the foreign working man, who is as much a victim of the industrial system as is the English working man. Neither can we blame the machine which displaces human labour. The only party at fault is the English working class itself, which has the power, but neither the sense nor courage, to make the machines serve and benefit the whole nation, instead of leaving them an a source of profit for one class. To punish the alien worker for the sin of the native capitalist is like the man who struck the boy because he was not strong enough to strike his father.

We will assume for the sake of argument, that the foreign worker is injurious to the English worker, and that the Government will prohibit him from coming here. What then England as a Free Trade country would thereby suffer severely; because the same commodities which the foreign worker used to produce here (being at the same time a source of income to the country), he will then produce abroad—much cheaper, too, because the cost of living is lower there. Those commodities will then be imported here. Will this benefit the English worker? Let Mr. Freak and Mr. Inskip answer.

The Froakians and Inskipians claim that the immigration of workers from other countries over-gluts the labour market, displaces English labour, and reduces the wages of the native workmen. From this it would logically follow that the emigration of workers from the country would have the contrary effect, i.e., would relieve the market, and thus bring on good times. In short, the more the immigration, the worse for a country; the more the emigration, the better for a country. If this is so, then how will they account for the following facts and figures?

The average annual immigration of Aliens in England according to the report of the Board of Trade for 1891-92-93 has been 24,688, (1) whilst the average annual emigration is put down by the Dictionary of Statistics at 164,000. (2) In face of those figures, we repeat our argument. If immigration over-gluts the market then emigration must logically relieve it. And, seeing that the emigration is more than six times the immigration, we cannot see why England should cry out so loudly about the foreigner. We will carry the question further, and we will prove to our English fellow workers that immigration or emigration in no way affects the condition of the working men or the state of the labour market.

In Germany the immigration is one-tenth of the emigration. In the United States it is vice versa. Still, the wages of a tailor in Germany is 15s., whilst in

the United States it is 58s. What will our opponents say to this? Again, in 1831-40 the immigration in the United States was 699,000. In 1881-89 it was 4,792,000; still, in the former period the daily wage of a tailor was 4s. 6d., whilst in the latter period it was 8s. 4d.(3) With these statistics in view we can safely say, that if the English worker has reason to be dissatisfied with his lot, let him not blame his foreign fellow working man; let him rather study the social and labour question—he will then find out where the shoe pinches.

Leaving the foreign worker in general, we will now deal with the Jewish worker in particular.

We, the Jewish workers, have been spoken of as a blighting blister upon the English trades and workers, as men to whose hearts it is impossible to appeal, and were it not for us, the condition of the native worker would be much improved, would have plenty of work, good wages, and what not. Well, let us look into facts; let us examine the condition of such workers with whom the Jew never comes in contact, such as the agricultural labourer, the docker, the miner, the weaver, the chain maker, ship builder, bricklayer and many others. Examine their condition, dear reader, and answer: Is there any truth in the remark that we are a "blighting blister" upon the English worker?

It is alleged that we are cutting down the wages of the English worker, and no proof is given in support of such an allegation. We on the other hand claim that English workers are reducing our wages and we will prove our claim.

That the ready-made clothing trade, the second class-made to order — tailoring trade, the mantle, waterproof clothing, cap, slipper, and cheap shoe trades have been created by the Jewish workers in this country — no one who knows anything about it will deny. Mr. Booth in his book "Life and Labour of the People," (4) declares "*That the ready-made clothing trade is not an invasion on the employment of the English tailor, but an industrial discovery.*"

In the report of the Board of Trade on the effects immigration, speaking of the boot and shoe trade we find the following (5) "The foreign Jews are, to a large extent, engaged on a common class of boots and shoes, some of which probably could not profitably be made by English labour under the existing statement, and might hence cease to be produced, or at least leave London (either for the provinces or abroad) were it not for the presence of Jewish labour." The reader should not fall into the mistake that the Jewish worker can produce the cheap class of boots because he will work for lower wages — far from it. In fact, the Jewish workers earn better wages in this cheap class than

the English do in the better class. This is due to their great abilities in turning out large quantities.

In a circular issued by the Mantle Makers' Union to the mantle manufacturers we read the following :— "*Germany and France, though behind England in the evolution of other trades, were ahead of her in the mantle trade. They have created a new branch of the trade in question. They have combined the quality, style, and workmanship of the bespoke tailor made, with nearly the cheapness of the cheap ready made. How did they do it? By applying the present mode of capitalistic manufacture — that is, production on a large scale, use of machinery and the division of labour, to the bespoke tailor-made garment. Thus England has been a market for Germany and France. Some years ago, certain English manufacturers realised that the same class of garments could be made in this country. Circumstances brought to England the class of workers, experts in that work, and the trade is now rapidly growing.*"

This is again corroborated by an article on the mantle trade, which appeared in a German periodical, the *Neue Zeit*, No. 39, of the year 1893, where the writer points out to his countrymen the cause of the diminution of the mantle trade in Germany. "*The cause is,*" he says, "*the transference of the trade to England by the Russian and Polish Jews.*" We could fill a book with quotations, statements, and figures, in favour of our claim. From what has been said, the truth-seeking reader will see how groundless is the accusation that we displace English labour.

Not only are we engaged in trades which we have introduced, but we have to a very great extent provided work for the English workers. According to the report mentioned above, the Jewish workers that are employed in the boot and shoe trade are less than 1 and a half per cent, of the total number of workers employed in that trade. The export of boots and shoes from the United Kingdom from the year 1873 till 1893 increased about 25 per cent. Taking into consideration that the Jewish products are mostly exported, and that their influx into the boot and shoe trade took place during that period, is it not reasonable to assume that the great increase in trade is to some extent due to them?

But that is nothing to what has been accomplished in the clothing trades. The trousers and vests are made entirely by English women; the weaving, cutting, book-keeping, and all work connected with the counting house is performed only by English men and women.

We will also remind our English friends of the fact that when the Jewish tailors of Leeds struck in 1888, the English workers in the cloth mills were put on half time.

When you, our English fellow workers, cry out so loud against our competition, while you fail to prove that it exists at all, when you call us a blighting blister, then what ought we to say to our English sister-slaves who are actually taking the bread out of our mouths by working for half the price, and are driving us out of the workshops which we have built up? Can they deny that they are making a mantle for a shilling, for which we have received two shillings?

We feel their throat-cutting competition in every trade which we have created, and which they have stepped into. Those who investigate the subject readily admit it. Thus we read in the report of the Board of Trade the following statements:— "*At present the Jews need only fear the competition with the English female labour.*" Again:— "*In the machining department, where foreign men compete with English women, the latter are gaining ground on the former.*" (6)

In view of the foregoing facts, we ask the impartial reader: Who is competing with whom, who is displacing whom — the Jew the English, or the English the Jew!

We have been branded by the Freakians and Inskipians as a class of people who are behind in the labour movement, who will not be organised, and to whose hearts it is impossible to appeal. We beg leave to ask these gentlemen whether their appeals to our hearts during the boot makers struggle with their masters did or did not find a response? If their memories fail them, we will recommend them to the Strike Committee.

Did it require much appealing to our hearts in the time of the great miners' struggle to induce us to organise a committee which raised £38 16s. 4d., besides what our Unions donated from their funds? We could enumerate many instances which would illustrate the deep sympathy with which the hearts of the Jewish working men are filled in response to every appeal made to them by their English fellow workers. But we must retrain, lest it be said that we are "boasting."

The gentlemen named above would have the world, believe that we are blacklegs, and that we will not be organised. True, some of us are hard to be convinced of the benefits of organisation, but when we can point to an army

of 3,000 union men in London alone, out of a total of about 10,000 Jewish working men, then we believe that we can hold up our heads against either English, Scots, Irish, or Welsh.

That there are some blacklegs amongst us is nothing more than natural, you will find them among all nations. But one thing must be admitted. It is this; That we have not amongst us an official organised army of blacklegs, such as the English can boast of, viz., "A free labour party".

We are behind the English working men in the labour movement, but were we not in front of them in the last 1st of May demonstration?

Just as we were about to write our concluding remarks in this leaflet, we have been informed by the Press that a deputation of the organised English working men met the Government and laid before them many resolutions that were passed at the Cardiff Congress. Of all that was asked, only one thing was granted. It is this: That all alien exploiters, swindlers, blacklegs, drunkards, idlers of all sorts who have money are welcomed here; but that skilful, industrious, honest working men, who have either been out of work for a long time, or have been locked out by their masters for taking part in strikes and boycotts, and therefore have no money, shall be prohibited from coming here.

We cannot congratulate the English working-class on this achievement. We believe that with all its influence with its great organisations and enormous funds, with its millions of votes, and, above all, with its great intelligence it ought to have achieved something better and nobler. In conclusion, we appeal to all right-thinking working men of England not to be misled by some leaders who have made it their cause to engender a bitter feeling amongst the British workers against the workers of other countries. Rather hearken to the voices of such leaders as will foster a feeling of international solidarity among the working people.

In conclusion, we appeal to our fellow-workers to consider whether there is any justification whatever for regarding as the enemies of the English workers the foreign workers, who, so far from injuring them, actually bring trade here and develop new industries; whether, so far from being the enemies of the English workers, it is not rather the capitalist class (which is constantly engaged in taking trade abroad, in opening factories in China, Japan, and other countries) who is the enemy, and whether it is not rather their duty to combine against the common enemy than fight against us whose interests are identical with theirs.

Independent Tailors, Machinists, and Pressers' Union.
United Ladies' Tailors and Mantle-Makers' Union.
United Cap Makers' Union.
The International Bakers' Union.
Independent Cabinet Makers' Association.
East London Branch of the National Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives.
Amalgamated Society of Tailors, Jewish Branch. Slipper Makers' Union.
The International Sew-Round and Operative Union, Upper Machiners' Union.
Cabinet Makers' Alliance, Hebrew Branch.

References

- (1) see page 9
- (2) Dictionary of Statistics page 247
- (3) Ibid. pp. 579, 583, 251
- (4) Booth's Life and Labour of the People, page 213
- (5) Report of the Board of Trade, 1891-2-3, pp 93,94
- (6) Report of the Board of Trade 1891-2-3, pp 93, 94

Links / Resources

The writing in this publication is often UK specific, but there are many transnational networks of resistance, of which the groups listed below are part of. Please visit, and get involved.

ANARCHIST AND SOLIDARITY GROUPS

NO BORDERS UK noborders.org.uk
A network of local groups campaigning against borders.

NO ONE IS ILLEGAL (UK) www.noii.org.uk
Challenging the ideology & campaigning for the abolition of immigration controls.

ANARCHIST BLACK CROSS www.abcf.net
ABCF site on political prisoners and prisoners of war.

ANARCHIST FEDERATION www.afed.org.uk
A UK based organisation working for revolutionary change to destroy capitalism through class struggle.

UK LESBIAN & GAY IMMIGRATION GROUP www.ulgig.org.uk
Promotes equality and dignity for lesbian, gay, bisexual & transgender people seeking, or who wish to immigrate to be with their same-sex partner.

CALAIS MIGRANT SOLIDARITY calaismigrantsolidarity.wordpress.com
On the ground solidarity with migrants in Calais. Also calais9.wordpress.com

CAMPAIGN AGAINST IMMIGRATION CONTROLS caic.org.uk
Fighting racism in the work place and promoting working rights for all.

Other groups

INTERNATIONAL WORKING CLASS ASSOCIATION www.iwca.info

BRISTOL RESISTANCE bristolresistance.blogspot.com

21 MILES twentyonemiles.wordpress.com

EDUCATION WITHOUT BORDERS educationwithoutbordersuk.wordpress.com

GENERAL ANALYSIS

CLIMATE NO BORDERS climatenoborders.wordpress.com

Many resources and articles (follow “pages column”) There is also an associated crabgrass page with yet more materials. Contact them to be added.

MANCHESTER NO BORDERS nobordersmanchester.blogspot.com

Has various articles examining class and solidarity in relation to migrant issues.

AYYA TO COCHABAMBA ayya2cochabamba.wordpress.com

Feedback from the Cochabamba conference from two people within the No Borders network (booklet to follow soon).

SPACE FOR MOVEMENT spaceformovement.wordpress.com

Response and analysis from Cochabamba, by the Building Bridges Collective.

SHIFT MAGAZINE

www.shiftmag.co.uk

Articles on Fortress Europe, Bolivia, COP15 and more.

VIRTUAL MIGRANTS www.virtualmigrants.com

An investigation into migration, diasporas, genocide and climate imperialism.

COMMUNALISM www.communalism.net

A social ecology journal

THE CORNER HOUSE

Many excellent articles investigating population and climate change.

POLYP polyp.org.uk & www.speechlessthebook.org

Cartoons about migration, globalisation and climate change.

Challenging privilege & racism

Challenging White Supremacy Workshops: www.csworkshop.org

Paul Kivel: www.paulkivel.com/articles.php

Shrub: blog.shrub.com/archives/tekanji/2006-03-08_146

Climate Justice Analysis

REDD MONITOR www.redd-monitor.org

CARBON TRADE WATCH www.carbontradewatch.org

NOTES FROM BELOW notesfrombelow.wordpress.com

REPORTS & ARTICLES

Too Many of Whom, and Too Much of What, No One Is Illegal.
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*Between Infoshops and Insurrection U.S. Anarchism, Movement Building, and
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*Militant, working class self-organisation: a response to Hope not Hate and
Unite Against Fascism*, Phil Dickens; website has other related articles.
truth-reason-liberty.blogspot.com/2010/08/militant-working-class-self.html

CLIMATE IN-JUSTICE



is not just about CO2

**CLIMATE CHANGE, CAPITALISM AND CARBON KNOW NO BORDERS...
FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT FOR ALL!**

NO BORDERS

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one
is
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About Us

Dysophia is a imprint for publishing pamphlets and zines exploring issues around green anarchist thought in order to make the issues accessible to everyone. We try to avoid dense theory, but give the knowledge to empower and make up your own minds.

For us green anarchism is a powerful tool for analysing much of the world around us, from inter-personal relationships to how we take on the big problems standing between us and our ideal society. We want to educate and encourage debate, to question everything then bring it together with solutions that take us forward. We are not interested in prolonged bickering over moot points, but celebrate our diversity and our common ambitions.

It is okay to challenge each other, it is okay to disagree. Knowledge does not have to be unified, but through honest, open discussion we all can benefit and make up our own minds.

We are always interested in feedback, suggestions of topics to cover or ideas of articles you would like to write for us. We try to respond to all emails, but we cannot guarantee it. We like debate but what we want ideally are responses and articles we can use in future publications or on our website.

Other available issues are

- Green Anarchism: a political toolbox (D0)
- Polyamory: anarchist perspectives (D1)
- The Crisis of Crises Pt1: The Financial Crisis (CC1)
- The Crisis of Crises Pt2: Peak Resources & Climate Change (CC2)
- Criticism *without* Critique: a Climate Camp reader (CCR)
- Dreaming Illich: An Open Letter on the Politics of Bicycles

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"This edition of *Dysophia* strives to make sense of the interplay between the pressing issues of immigration control, population growth and climate change. Critical of right-wing demagoguery and the opportunism of those in power, and questioning of reductionist environmental arguments raised by some on the Left, the contributions investigate contemporary current thinking on these themes.

Critically, the submissions propose ~ in analytical yet accessible form ~ where we as anarchists should situate ourselves in these challenging debates."

anarchist & migrant solidarity campaigner