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I am not suggesting that libertarians should be missionaries, always trying to recruit new worshipers. But it is an opportunity to create dialogue, which is of the upmost importance. Anti-authoritarian politics should not be tucked away in a dusty closet. With the popularity of the Zeitgeist movement, this dialogue could happen on a large scale. And that is why Joseph's work is a significant piece of pop-culture.

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I'm not kidding). The fact that a constituency who bought ultra-extreme ideology for so long seems to be accepting of the sustainable technocracy for which Joseph is a proponent is certainly less-worse. But is the technocratic metropolis something that can ever be sustainable? Has "Zeitgeist" thought outside the box, or would Fresco's sustainable city be every bit as alienating as our current "cities?" Further, can we reach sustainability without creating new paradigms? I believe it is doubtful.

I think praxes that explain "This is the way to freedom!" can be interesting; there are certainly other examples of classical anarchists like James Guillame and Peter Kropotkin writing specifically about their ideal communities, or even Michael Albert with his intricately planned "Parecon" idea (whatever one may think of it). I do believe, however, that the rigidity of a plan can alienate anti-authoritarians, and perhaps Joseph should sympathize with all people who are opposed to capital and state; this should be the area on which we focus instead of focusing on our ideal new society. I am not suggesting we should not try to build alternative institutions like co-ops and free spaces for everyone; this is the kind of work we should certainly take part in. But we need not focus all of our time on someone's specific praxis and ideal about a future society. It is crucial to understand for these ideal future societies to exist, we must dismantle the oppressive authoritarian institutions that prohibit Joseph's scientific green city, or my ideal communist society. This is where our activism, and certainly our creativity, should focus.

Further, it could be argued that it is wasted effort writing about something so insignificant like Zeitgeist. It is, after all, weak in theory, and seems to come from a film-maker who realized that the conspiracism that made his first video so popular is losing momentum (this is certainly a good thing that the alienated, mostly white males, who patronized the intellectually bankrupt industry of distraction seem to be abandoning it). But it is sort of quasi-anarchistic, and quite popular. This gives libertarians, whether Marxian or anarchist, an opportunity to discuss their ideas with people who may have previously been unsympathetic to anarchism. It can be a nice segue, like "You know, this whole Zeitgeist thing is pretty close to anarchism."

liberals take; they believe that if we simply consume less, eat organic, and ride a bike, we can moralize a morally bankrupt system, i.e., capitalism. I would see little difference if property-owners bought land in bulk to build such cities. Joseph will have to develop his analysis, because it is unlikely that the bourgeois State will allow his utopia to coexist.

Joseph is correct: capitalism is inefficient and will most certainly destroy the planet left to its own cancerous devises. But his lack of class-analysis connotes that he's never seriously studied capitalist critique. I suppose this is a good thing, that people inherently see the flaws in capitalism, but when one has a platform speaking of these ills as if they happen in a vacuum, I find it quite troubling.

When the words "wage-slavery," "subordination," and, perhaps most importantly, "private property" are missing from a critique of capital, it begs many questions, and suggests liberalism and reformism, like the social democrats attempts to create a "green" capitalism.

Zeitgeist's Value and Optimism

In this essay, I could be perceived as one who has written the Zeitgeist Movement off as conspiracist drivel; mostly I have. However, at the crux of it, there are anarchistic connotations. Who's to say that this is not prefigurative politics, i.e., the idea of building a new world in the shell of the old? Or, who could argue that, if this truly was a decentralized, non-hierarchical free-space for people, it is not striving to build a dual power structure? Both prefigurative politics and dual-power building are both anarchistic tendencies, and I argue the Zeitgeist Movement could be that.

Also, certainly environmental degradation subordinates the majority of human beings who would not destroy the planet left to their own vices to the miniscule percent of the population of property owners who are destroying the planet. Joseph is addressing these problems, and a majority of his audience is coming from the conspiracy industry that predominantly believes global-warming is a hoax created to perpetuate socialism through carbon tax (no,

The Zeitgeist Movement is now ubiquitous. Everywhere I turn, I hear alienated youth having dialogue about this phenomenon, and I opened a local free newspaper recently to find an article about college dropouts who drive a bus around the country promoting the movement's ideas.

There is a of course a great irony in this movement: "Zeitgeist" has all but replaced the fringe-groups discussing September 11th being an inside-job and other irrelevant "conspiracies" (of course the conspiracy industry is reluctant to acknowledge the two greatest public conspiracies: capital and the State). In other words, the anti-political fiction du-jour has had quite the metamorphosis. Alex Jones, one of the entrepreneurs of the conspiracy industry and proponents of "New World Order" "theory" (if ever a word was so bastardized), has been dethroned by Peter Joseph and his hypothetical technological utopia.

Joseph, too, has drastically changed his tune. The first Zeitgeist film was cliché conspiracism, i.e., the Federal Reserve, September 11th, and the New World Order are discussed in intricate, albeit fabricated, detail. These are all favorites in the conspiracist milieus.

"Zeitgeist" has changed this, however. The mostly anglo-saxon, (previously) politically right-leaning constituency that praised Ron Paul as the new savior, has (kind of) done a 180. What do I mean by this? Well, for the uninitiated, the Zeitgeist Movement has now claimed to be the "activist arm" of the Venus Project, a strange organization spearheaded by social engineer and architect Jaque Fresco. Without digressing into an abyss, a brief overview of the Venus Project would be relevant to the discussion: a technologically advanced city blueprint that did away with money, war, environmental degradation, and eventually, they claim, government. Jaque Fresco and Zeitgeist leader Peter Joseph describe these sustainable cities as encompassing a "resource-based economy."

What would be relevant to anti-authoritarians about such a movement? What should be relevant is the fact that many are co-opting, connoting, or merely associating the movement with anarchism.

An overview of "Zeitgeist" sounds good, and anti-authoritarian. What's the problem, you may ask? The main problem is that it's a utopian vision, i.e., the Zeitgeist Movement goes in depth on how

the new world will look, but it offers no vision on how to create the new world within the shell of the old. The second problem is essentially an extension of the former: people should not be told what kind of society they should have. It is highly doubtful that anti-authoritarian theory can come from an authority, academic or otherwise. Anti-authoritarian theory is participatory, and if meaningful, is created by a majority. Wherein "revolution" is needed, to remain anti-authoritarian and relevant to a majority of the population, it requires the majority. Otherwise, it risks the danger of becoming a vanguard. But "Zeitgeist" has no mention of how to get from here-to-there.

Troublesome in the dialogue I have heard, as mentioned, is the idea that "Zeitgeist" is anarchism (Johnson, 2009). Anarchism has never preached one way, as does "Zeitgeist" (save for the anarcho-dogmatists). The lack of plurality within the movement and acceptance, of say, primitivists, syndicalists, communists, or other socialists, is not known because it is omitted. "Zeitgeist" also immediately connotes hierarchy since it puts all of its faith in science, hence scientists. Since some will be more apt than others towards science, this could easily give us a new bureaucracy.

The Zeitgeist Movement is not a political movement?

Peter Joseph claims that "Zeitgeist" is not a political movement. (-Joseph, 2009). This is a strange statement for Joseph. After all, he is deeming power structures useless and obsolete, wants to abolish the monetary system, dismantle multinational corporations, and, apparently, the nation-state. Not political? It sounds an awful lot like historical political movements that arose through the development of capitalism and the labor movement's response to it (these are those pesky working-class people that Joseph is reluctant to mention), i.e., Marxism, and anarchism. Perhaps he's been on the fringe right-wing for so long studying conspiracism (which seems to be not so en vogue these days as evidenced by the popularity of this

anti-war activists acknowledge that the Palestinians have a right to defend themselves from aggressors.

This ideal suggests that capitalism is simply outdated; that the power-structures that enslave the working class and prevent them from a life of human solidarity and creativity, and destroys the environment through (Joseph acknowledges this) a profit-driven incentive that surpasses anything else.

Peter Joseph's Analysis of Capital

This brings me to Joseph's perception of the global economy. He defines the players involved as employers, employees, and consumers. And his perception is that the problem with these relationships is that capitalism is terribly inefficient. Joseph almost seems to place working-class individuals in the same realm as the bourgeoisie, explaining that they simply cannot reach a compromise. This is analogous to saying that those who run prisons cannot compromise with the prisoners. Those who currently own the means of production need not compromise; they have an army of desperate wage-slaves, ranging from neurosurgeons to janitors. Their job is to buy these wage-slaves labor on the cheap, and collect surplus value. Ironically, the capitalist does not use the means of production that she or he "owns."

This is an historical critique of capital and private property. Anti-authoritarians have criticized the idea that such an entity exists. Anarchists and libertarian Marxists agree that what one uses, one possesses. So, if a capitalist "owns" a chunk of property and employs 80 wage-slaves who use his means of production daily, the anarchist or libertarian Marxist feels that the wage slaves possess the means of production that the capitalist technically "owns." A thoughtful critique of private property is missing in Joseph's analysis.

Does Joseph think that the property owners, whether the State or private owners, will tolerate him using their land to build an off-the-grid city that is not affiliated with the State or capital? Certainly, he is not this naïve. If he is suggesting that people buy up property to do this, then it is simply liberal reform. This is the same elitist stance that

being collectively owned by everyone), but the split came between the authoritarian and the libertarian socialists, the statist-wing and non-statist wing, respectively. Those libertarian-socialists came to represent a revolutionary philosophy that set out to dismantle capitalism, the State, and all other oppressive hierarchical structures; this was the philosophy of anarchism.

So, anarchism is certainly a political movement. Yes, it seeks no political party or major organization to govern the people, and abhors the notion of parliamentary, representative government. But it seeks to put political power in the hands of communities, through whatever means the communities deem appropriate, i.e., direct democracy, consensus, workers council, or even technocracies like Joseph condones. Perhaps this is what Joseph means to say: the Zeitgeist Movement does not seek to establish some kind of political party or organization, but it is certainly a political movement since it seeks to put the political power in everyone's hands.

An anarchocentric critique of the Zeitgeist Movement doesn't reject many of the ideas for which Joseph has presented. But there are major fallacies. Joseph has proposed a futurist society that will not appeal to everyone as the end-all solution to our problems. I certainly wouldn't oppose a community like the one Joseph speaks of existing after a revolution that dismantled capitalism and the State; I utterly condone a pluralistic world with many different types of societies co-existing, as long as they are voluntary, and non-oppressive. Also, as mentioned, this is not something we can achieve, whether technocratic or a society ran according to anarcho-syndicalism principles, through reform, or an unprepared working class. As far as I'm concerned, if the majority of the working class is not participating in the movement, then the movement is not significant.

If the second principle is the case, i.e., they believe that such a grand scheme can only come about when there is a consciousness shift, or further evolution of the human species, well, this would be a simple case of a philosophy which condones some form of idealism and utopianism, and is not rooted in the pragmatic or material world. Comparatively, pacifists might tell the Palestinians to let Israeli aggressors slaughter them or their family, because pacifism is an ideal. Some hardliners would promote this nonsensical idea, while most

Zeitgeist thing) that he doesn't know his history. For a movement to be "political," it doesn't require political parties and leadership; political movements can be non-hierarchical and have nothing to do with the state or, like anarchism, be against the state.

One would think that someone who is articulating a framework for overthrowing the State and capitalism would have done some research. Either Joseph is omitting the works of Marx and classical anarchism, i.e., the revolutionary aspects of what is called the Left, or he is simply omitting the history to appeal to a constituency that is of the extremist right. Think about the opposite scenario: let's assume that I try to sell a scheme to the Left that involves completely deregulated markets, dated ideas like the gold standard, condemn war because it isn't cost-effective, seek to abolish all taxes and reduce the role of government, but never mention the history of lasaize-faire economics; I don't think that the left would be as kind, and quickly point out that I am trying to pitch them a rehashed, watered-down version of capitalism.

A-historical accounts are troublesome in any regard. The American "progressive" community is quick to point out the criminal actions of Republican presidents like George W. Bush, but slow, or reticent, to discuss analogous and equally atrocious acts committed by presidents like JFK or Bill Clinton (the conspiracist right-wing is also reticent in regards to the former). For this, the so-called "progressives," or the "left-of-center," get nowhere and are not to be taken seriously. The Zeitgeist Movement is comparable in this regard.

Either Joseph doesn't understand what a political movement is or, worse, this isn't a political movement; the latter would suggest that the "activist arm" of the Venus Project is really just part of the larger, lucrative conspiracy industry that attracts an extremely alienated working-class to invest money in their pyramid schemes. To say that it is not a political movement would suggest that this is simply just a neat idea that is fun to read about; in this case, there is a vast body of futurist fiction, in which case, whatever one thinks about it, it is at least candid about the fact that it is science-fiction. If the former is true, then the Zeitgeist Movement represents vulgar utopianism.

Joseph and the Venus Project are proposing something radical: they are proposing that humanity, essentially, abolishes the nation-

state, parliamentary bodies, and capitalism. There are many assumptions that can be made about the Zeitgeist Movement as such, but I will limit it to these for the moment: (1) Joseph and proponents of the Venus Project believe that they can achieve this new society through reforms (because to my knowledge they do not speak or write about a clash with the state, i.e., revolution); (2) they are coming from an angle that suggests that this will happen when there is a consciousness-shift, i.e., humans are too stupid and greedy to have this society at the moment; (3) they have a naïve assumption, and again, an a-historical stance on what happens to the working-class (does Joseph even mention them?) when they attempt to overthrow the bourgeois state, i.e., fascist private militias, concentration camps, murder of civilians en masse, etc., because they do not speak of revolution as such; or (4) the proponents of this top-down movement do not really view it as something attainable, resorting it to fiction or an interesting idea.

If the first assumption is true, i.e., that a technocratic society sans government and capitalism could be achieved through reform, then this movement is certainly not to be taken seriously. Is anyone really naïve enough to believe that abolishing the bourgeois nation-state and the arbitrary economic system that it resuscitates time-and-time again will be welcomed by the ruling-class ? This is, of course, nonsensical. But, to my knowledge, again, the Zeitgeist Movement has no class analysis, no politics, etc. It is agnostic on everything.

To perceive that this first sustainable city is built somehow, without the capitalists shutting it down any way they can, let us hypothetically extrapolate on the scenario: a city gets built in, we're assuming, the Western world (because third-world US client-states would simply cut their heads off the second they said they were going to build an autonomous self-sustaining city) that is autonomous, has no allegiance to any government, any monetary system, and is completely off-the-grid. What is the first reaction that the State will have? Well, I would extrapolate that the national guard, Blackwater and other fascist, private militias, the police, the FBI, and probably every military force in the world would invade the city and murder everyone they can; this is if they do not simply drop missiles on the first sustainable city. This is the kind of defiance that the bourgeoisie

has not tolerated, historically (see the Zapatista Movement and the Spanish Civil War).

Revolutionary social and political theories that historically come from class struggle in contrary to the development of capitalism are not naïve about this; these theories acknowledge that if revolution is to be successful, i.e., dismantling the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, there must be organized resistance among the majority of people (the working-class) and, an unfortunate matter, a clash with the State (if only in defense). Marx acknowledged the class struggle in he and Engel's The Communist Manifesto, and believed that the history "of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles" (Marx & Engels). Further:

Freeman and slave, patrician and plebian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes. (Marx)

Marx's acknowledgements are spot-on; it is his techniques on how to have revolution that many believed to be flawed. Marx favored an educated sect of the working-class, what he referred to as the dictatorship of the proletariat, running a transition state which would yield a stateless, classless, society, sans monetary systems (sounds a bit like the Zeitgeist Movement, no?).

Who, on the "left," was to the contrary? The relevant sect of the early history of the labor movement, and that sect that was, in fact, contrary to Mr. Marx, was that of the anarchists and their respective movements. Without digressing into too much detail, we can give a brief overview as such showing the split in the 1870's in the First International, or the International Working Men's Association (excuse the dated, sexist preclusion of women radicals in the name). This was an anti-capitalist, international organization of the working class that was communistic and socialist, but there was a major difference within the organization: those that sided with Marx and Engels, and those that sided with anarchist Mikhail Bakunin (soon to become one of Marx's loathed rivals). All were socialists, certainly (meaning, simply, they favored the means of production and political power