

An unorthodox Marxist looks at Mormonism and sees the best remedy
of the Mormon experience as one of redemptive, materialistic communitarianism.

APPROACHES TO ZION: WHY LIBERALISM IS NOT THE ANSWER

By Bill Martin

THIS ARTICLE IS A PART OF WHAT I BELIEVE TO BE the first large-scale study of the Mormon culture and movement written from a Marxist point of view.¹ My general aim is to ask what Mormonism might contribute to the project of creating a global community given its history, its practices, and its conceptual stock (philosophy, theology, and ideology). I am especially interested in showing how liberalism—Enlightenment concepts of individual rights and freedoms—appear to resist unnecessarily conservative policies of the Church hierarchy, but actually presents a false path to community. The Liberal path leads, at best, to the secular world, but never beyond it.

Much of Marxism bogs down in secular thought, too, thereby losing its aim of creating a new kind of community, one that transcends secular society. Furthermore, with the sense of connectedness in both contemporary physics and the study of planetary ecology, our communitarian aspirations should extend even beyond our own species. Under the severe pressure of what I call the hyper-secular world of postmodern capitalism, Marxists—and pretty much everyone else—seem to have forgotten the community in communism.² (The sorry state of much of what is called Marxism these days—most of it mere left-liberalism but of an especially “economistic” sort—strongly correlates with this forgetfulness.) We—and here I mean Marxists and everyone else in the secular world—must relearn the meaning of community. To accomplish this we must grapple with the practices, experiences, and philosophies of groups who have attempted to live against the grain of the secular world. If that is not done, the secular world will succeed in destroying any sense of what community means. And if that happens, I don’t know how community can be reinvented in the midst of the post-political, timeless space of the

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eternal present of capitalist (market) calculation.

LEARNING FROM THE SAINTS

*Mormonism's redemptive, materialist communitarianism
has a lot to teach the world.*

THE Latter-day Saints are not the only ones from whom we can learn about community, but they represent a special case for a number of reasons.

1. *Mormon power.* (I use this term in a sense similar to the way that Lenin and Mao referred to “Soviet power,” though I do not mean the Soviet Union imperialism of the last several decades.) By this, I refer to the alternative ways of organizing life throughout the Mormon world but especially in the Intermountain West.

2. *Communitarian practices and ideology.* The Mormon experience provides important case studies in Missouri and the Great Basin that have been informed by the revelations of the prophet Joseph Smith in the Doctrine and Covenants.

3. *The materialism of Mormon theology.* This, of course, has many interesting aspects as seen from a Marxist point of view. Mormonism’s understanding of the injunction to “be in the world but not of it” takes the “in” seriously, resulting in a finitist theology and a concrete engagement with building Zion in this world, indeed, on this very planet.

4. *The redemptive project of Mormonism.* This relates to its communitarian and materialist aspects, especially apparent in genealogy work, the temple reenactment of humanity’s struggles, the sealing of families, and baptism for the dead.

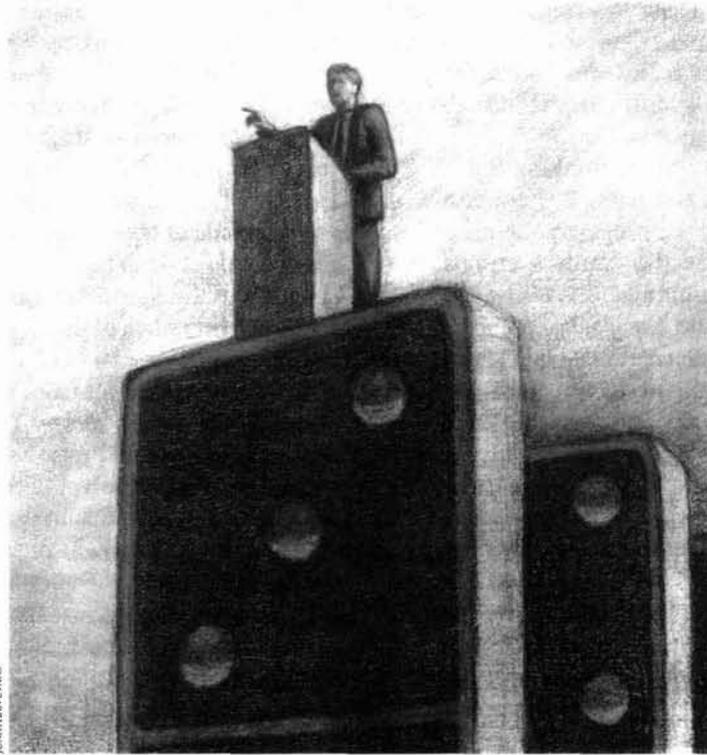
A valid reading of the Mormon experience, perhaps even the best and most necessary reading, sees the Restoration as one of redemptive, materialist communitarianism. This is also the best reading of Marxism (or at least a certain type of Marxism). I do not aim for some sort of complete rapprochement, assimilation, or synthesis of one with the other, but I hope that Marxism and Mormonism can learn from each other

5. *Mormon parallels with other socialist attempts.* The larger impasse to communitarianism of Western society (and, therefore, world society) seems to have infected the Mormon pro-

ject as well—indeed, there is no way this could not have happened. It is even possible that since the Manifesto of 1890 the Mormon world has assimilated irreparably with the secular world. The dialectic is one between the *ideal* of Zion and the *temptation* of “Zionism”; the temptation, if fundamentally succumbed to, inevitably betrays the ideal. A comparison between the Mormon world since 1890 and the Soviet Union during the Stalin period may shock a few people, but I hope in such a way as to get them thinking about positive possibilities. Consider: If the Soviet Union during the Stalin period, with its conservatism, dictatorial regime, nationalism, etc., could still be said to embody, in some way, socialism—an embattled, dogmatized socialism approaching ever more rapidly an impasse—then the Mormon world can be said still to embody the ideals of Zion, even though the Mormon world, too, approaches the impasse of contemporary capitalism and secular society that prevents it from achieving its ideal.

Sometimes the Mormon world seems not to be simply the victim of this general malaise, but—especially the hierarchy—seems to embrace the malaise. This could be said of Stalin as well. Are we dealing with compromises intended to open a path through the twists and turns that the upbuilding of Zion must take? Or are we dealing with a compromise so fundamental that the upbuilding of Zion no longer exists in a meaningful sense? If the latter, then the supposedly high ideals of the official movement become no more than an advertising scam, just as “socialism” became the cover for Soviet capitalism after Khrushchev took power. With this question, we are already moving into the reasons why liberalism is not the answer to Mormon conservatism and its accommodation with the impasse.

There are many examples of conservatism in Mormonism. The Sonia Johnson case, the censoring and excommunication of Mormon intellectuals, the issue of academic freedom at Brigham Young University, etc.; then there are high Church officials who are part of John Birch Society-type anti-communist



LIBERAL FRAMEWORKS CANNOT ADDRESS THE FACT THAT, WHEN THE FABRIC OF EXISTING LIFE IS RIPPED UP LIKE SO MUCH REFUSE, WITH THE MEANS OF SUPPORTING ONE'S FAMILY BEING THE FIRST CASUALTY, FORMAL LIBERTIES HAVE LITTLE MEANING.



response. The second point, that liberalism is a false road, is the main emphasis of what follows.

MORMON LIBERALISM

The Mormon left has intertwined the liberal values of the "American sense of fair play" and individual rights with the very different values of communitarianism.

ONE reads continually in the progressive—what I call “Left Mormon” publications—(mainly *SUNSTONE* and *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*) of the plight of the “Mormon liberal.” And one continually hears of Mormon intellectuals, especially, getting into hot water for simply pursuing what seem to be legitimate scholarly investigations into the culture, history, and meanings of Mormonism. Lavina Fielding Anderson recently compiled an extensive list of such incidents, published as the lead essay in the spring 1993 *Dialogue*, in which all of the essays address dissent in the Church. I read Anderson's and the other essays with great sym-

crusades, who say that “when the Brethren speak, the thinking has been done,” who organize the defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment, who eagerly purchase documents that may cast a negative light on the Church and suppress scholarly investigation into Mormonism. We are entitled to ask, “What is the dynamic here?” The guiding question is whether the upbuilding of Zion is really possible in an official atmosphere that can be described as conservative and complacent. I subscribe to the “Duke Ellington theory of socialism,” which would apply to any attempt to forge a new world: “It don't mean a thing, if it ain't got that swing,” and these examples ain't got the swing of a utopian community.

But my aim here is not to rush to judgment. Instead, my argument is that (1) we need to understand exactly what *kind* of conservatism actually exists in official Mormondom, and (2) we need to show why, regardless of the conservatism in official circles, liberalism is neither an adequate nor appropriate

pathy, and I learned a great deal. I saw two trends of thought represented in them, both captured by something Anderson said at the end of her chronology. She listed a number of proposals for addressing the plight of Mormon intellectuals; the second one contained this statement:

I pay my church the compliment of thinking that it espouses the ideals of justice and fairness. I am confused when leaders confiscate temple recommends of members who publicly praise the church's actions. Blacklists, secret files, and intimidation violate my American sense of fair play and my legal expectation of due process. They violate the ideal that truth is best served by an open interchange, that disagreement can be both courteous and clarifying, and that differences are not automatically dangerous.³

Anderson's first proposal, in full, is also important for this discussion of liberalism and community:

[W]e must speak up. We must stop keeping "bad" secrets when our church acts in an abusive way. We must share our stories and our pain. When we feel isolated, judged, and rejected, it is easy to give up, to allow ourselves to become marginalized, and to accept the devaluation as accurate. If we silence ourselves or allow others to silence us, we will deny the validity of our experience, undermine the foundations of authenticity in our personal spirituality, and impoverish our collective life as a faith community. During the 1970s and 1980s I was an observer and occasionally a co-worker as a handful of modern women scholars discovered Mormon women's history. They did it from the documents. No living tradition had survived of the spiritual gifts and powers of Mormon women, of how they saw themselves, of their vision for women of the church and the world. By failing to perpetuate the past as a living tradition, the women and men who were its guardians had erased it. I cannot adequately express how much this hurt me. I learned for myself that silence and self-censorship are terrible wrongs. Reducing the diversity of voices in a community to a single, official voice erases us. We must join in the on-going dialogue between individual and community out of necessity and also out of love.⁴

Paul Toscano's essay in the same volume also expresses the two trends of thought, but, without getting into the essay itself, I simply want to cite the sub-title of his piece, which expresses one of the trends: "choose love not power." Toscano offers this as a "plea to the leadership."

In the following discussion, I am interested in criticizing positions and formulations, not individuals. I have no desire to make life harder than it already is, and I have nothing but admiration for these Mormon intellectuals. It does seem to me, however, that some hard choices have to be made. The two trends of thought, which are both evident *and* very much intertwined in these two exemplary expressions by Mormon intellectuals, are liberalism and communitarianism. As an out-

sider to Mormonism, but as a person who believes we must build a mutually flourishing community in this world or else the world is doomed, and as a person active in movements working to build such community, I want to situate this intertwining of liberalism and communitarianism. In the largest sense this intertwining has many characteristics typical of the impasse of communitarianism that contemporary society faces as a whole. But the impasse of Mormon liberalism also has a number of particular traits that cannot be separated from the situation of the Mormon world.

Some particulars of this issue that apply more specifically to Mormon intellectuals—Left Mormons—are beyond the scope of this discussion; here I aim to set out the dynamic of the impasse in the larger society (by which I mean U.S. society, though many points I raise could apply to secular culture as a whole) and the relation of liberalism and communitarianism in Mormon culture to this larger dynamic. However, one aspect of focusing on the plight of Mormon intellectuals partakes of the larger dynamic: the question of the division of labor in secular society that intellectuals, on the whole, benefit from—a division that must be overcome in building the mutually flourishing community. (By "division of labor" is meant that separation of productive tasks in society whereby some people work primarily with their minds and others primarily with their bodies in "manual labor.") To the extent that intellectuals do not address this division when questioning community leadership—leaders who, as Anderson put it, most Mormons credit with espousing the ideals of justice and fairness—then to that extent they distance themselves from the building of Zion. To the extent they give in to the liberal-secular temptation, they also distance themselves from those who, from whatever "un-schooled" perspective, struggle to build the community. In other words, intellectual life, even apart from the particular situation of the Mormon world, has its own built-in temptations toward liberalism and denial of the communitarian project. Frankly, (and this is where things start to get hard), appeal to the existence of an "intellectual community" is not the answer to this situation.

MORMONISM AS A RESPONSE TO CAPITALISM

On the periphery of the rise of capitalism, early Mormon leaders created a post-Enlightenment materialism that wove the entirety of social, political, economic and religious fabrics into one communitarian system that welcomed those dispossessed by capitalism.

CONSIDER briefly the world of the Restoration. This was the Western world, the "Christian" world, the world of (the) Enlightenment, and the world of developing capitalist relations. There was, however, an unevenness in the development of this world; the Saints emerged not at the European heart of this world, but on its periphery. What was the relation of Joseph Smith and the early Saints to this world, to modernity? On the one hand, there was a strong dose of Enlightenment thinking in Joseph Smith's outlook, especially in the materialist aspects of his more developed theology. On

the other hand, there was a resistance to some aspects of modernity. Despite fierce resistance from Luddites, utopian socialists, Marxists, unionists, the Paris Communards, and others, industrial capitalism rolled over Europe like an unstoppable steamroller. But there were other possibilities on the periphery—where Joseph Smith was—for resistance to what Joseph called a society of “bankers, lawyers, and businessmen.”

In Europe, capitalism emerged from a long incubation period within feudal society, during which capitalist economic relations spread as the basis for the seizure of political power. Things did not develop in quite this way in North America. (I am not, however, putting forward the thesis that has come to be called “American exceptionalism,” for, if anything, when industrial capitalism did take hold in the U.S., it did so in a purer and more powerful form.) The uneven and inorganic nature of capitalism’s development in the U.S., along with the persistence of an agricultural economy and culture well into this century, allowed for developments on the periphery of capitalism not unlike the emergence of socialist movements in Russia and China at the end of the last century and in the first decades of this century. This unevenness also allowed for an uneven and, in the best reading, critical appropriation of Enlightenment ideas. Thus we see, in Joseph Smith and others (perhaps most notably Orson Pratt), an Enlightenment materialism combined with the “magic world view” (as D. Michael Quinn puts it). Incidentally, I believe that this combination—perhaps we should call it “magical materialism”—is best worked out in Orson Scott Card’s *Alvin Maker* and *Ender* series.⁵ This theology, developing in Joseph’s day and again today, was coherent (for the most part) and corresponded to certain significant structural features of the U.S. frontier—which was why Mormonism was successful in ways other new religious movements ultimately were not.

The most important structural feature of the periphery of capitalist society that the early Mormon movement spoke to



JONATHAN EVANS

SIMPLY FOLLOWING THE VALUES OF LIBERALISM DOES NOT LEAD A GROUP TO A MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL COMMUNITY; IN THE END, LIBERALISM BECOMES AN IMPASSE THAT PREVENTS COMMUNITY BECAUSE ITS “I CAN SAY WHAT I WANT TO SAY” PHILOSOPHY IS NOT TIED TO THE AIM OF COMMUNITY BUT TO THE INDIVIDUAL.



means of supporting one’s family being the first casualty, formal liberties have little meaning.

How did the early Saints react to their situation? Was it a “historically progressive” reaction? It seems to me that, using Hill’s model, we would have to conclude that the early Mormons were historically reactionary—they rebelled against emerging American liberal individualism. But I do not accept this, for a reason that perhaps only makes sense from a Marxist point of view. (What I am going to say now assumes the idea of a historical teleology, but I hope not an overly-deterministic one. Note that I take some developments to be contingent, and that I am interested in transformations of values and conceptual frames—“discourse regimes”—as well as modes of production.) Although U.S. capitalism did not organically grow out of a fully-developed, pre-existing feudal society, the U.S. polity in the East did, in fact, replace a regime of discourse that had been feudal. The American Revolution contained a number of possible directions that could have been pursued,

was dispossession (that is, loss or lack of means of subsistence) and, as part of this, the rending of existing forms of life (mainly of farmers, laborers, and craftspeople). While I cannot explore this issue fully here, it seems that not focusing on dispossession as a central issue is a crucial shortcoming of both Marvin S. Hill’s *Quest for Refuge: The Mormon Flight from American Pluralism* and Nathan O. Hatch’s, *The Democratization of American Christianity*.⁶ Both books discuss the early Mormon movement as a kind of reaction to burgeoning freedom, in the form of “pluralism” (especially religious pluralism) and what Hatch calls “the excesses of democracy.” In doing this, they both give the U.S. polity—even that of the first decades of the Republic—far too much credit. Likewise, so does Lavina Fielding Anderson when she mentions her “American sense of fair play and . . . legal expectation of due process.” These liberal frameworks cannot address the fact that, when the fabric of existing life is ripped up like so much refuse, with the

including Thomas Jefferson's agrarian communitarianism. Indeed, following Kenneth H. Winn, *Exiles in a Land of Liberty: Mormons in America, 1830–1846*, I see the Jeffersonian road (again, the best reading of it) as the road not taken by the larger U.S. polity, but also as influencing early Mormons even to the point that they did, in some important respects, attempt to take that road.⁷ As capitalism took hold in the U.S., class differentiation and dispossession increased. In every society where this process has occurred, a social (and sometimes expressly political) movement has arisen to reclaim the previously existing form of life. Thus Frederick Engels, for example, in his *Peasant War in Germany*,⁸ notes that around the time of the Protestant Reformation an alliance of peasants and feudal aristocrats moved to resist urban capitalism. Engels argues that such movements cannot succeed because, at best, they can only recapitulate developments in the mode of production and in politics and culture that have already had their day. If these developments still had something to contribute, a political movement based upon them might get somewhere. But Marx and Engels both argue in various texts that such forms of "romantic reaction" tend to peter out (as did the movement Engels discussed).

The Latter-day Saints, as we know, did not peter out as a movement, and they continue to grow. The success of the Saints in the twentieth century could be explained in other ways than by attributing an ongoing contribution to history to the movement, because it could simply be that Mormonism has made its peace with contemporary capitalism and now serves as a useful appendage of it. I will turn to this issue of accommodation later, but now I will concentrate on the nineteenth-century Latter-day Saints.

Many people in the United States in the first decades of the Republic resisted the development of capitalism. Most forms of resistance turned out to be futile, but not the movement of the Saints. Latter-day Saints, more than any other nineteenth-century resistance to the unfolding secular-capitalist order, under the visionary leadership of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young, offered the most complete form of resistance—economic, political, military, ideological, cultural, philosophical, and theological. They organized an alternative form of life, rooted in economic and political power, aided by a certain amount of strategic (shall we say) inspiration, made coherent by its own developing culture, and defended, when necessary, by force of arms. It seems to me that such a movement could not have succeeded in the way that it did, erecting a series of city-states (Nauvoo being the most developed) and ultimately a nation-state, if it had been only an historically backward step in the face of capitalism. (Incidentally, one action of Joseph's leadership particularly underscores the centrality of early Mormon dispossession, as well as the visionary character of that leadership. In the midst of great troubles—violent persecution in Missouri and the failure of the anti-bank—Joseph sent some of the most important apostles on a proselyting mission to England. There the missionaries recruited the very people written about by Engels in *The Condition of the Working Class in Manchester*.⁹)

MODERN MORMON COMMUNITARIANISM

The tragedy would be to see this tradition simply become another appendage of secular society.

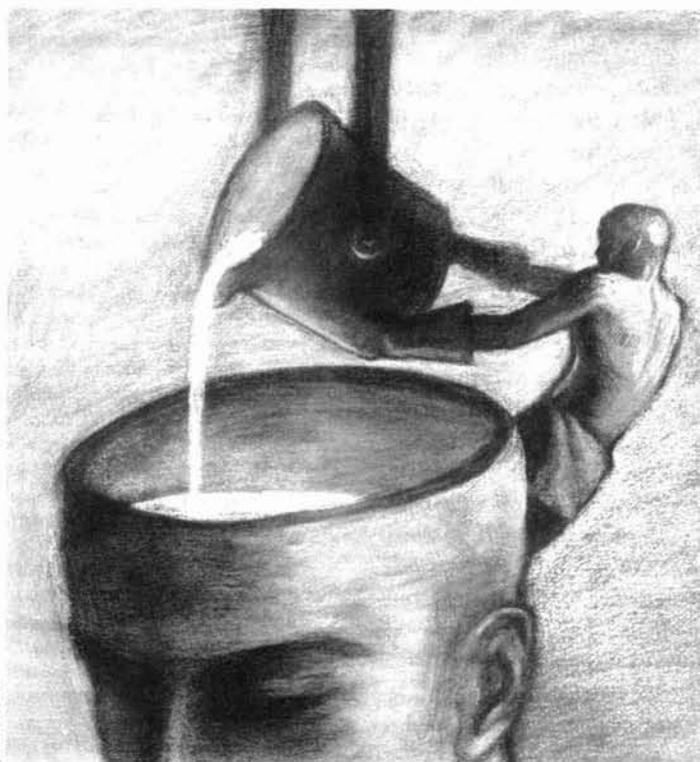
LET us now come full circle to the liberalism question: What is the character of Mormon power today? The preceding analysis does not preclude the possibility that an historically progressive movement of the dispossessed might include some retrograde elements, that is, some steps backwards. The early Mormon movement was a communitarian movement that came to hold state power. One aspect of the "glue" that held the community together was a rejection of capitalism and secular society by people who had been victims of the new capitalist (i.e., market) and secular "freedoms." Another form of that glue was patriarchy that, if anything, is stronger in the Mormon world today than it was in the nineteenth century. Anderson's comment about a hidden history of women in the Mormon movement speaks to the great irony that, in some ways, women had more power and were more free in the time of polygamy. This history alone attests to the fact that a "Mormon feminism," an attempt to hear the diversity of women's voices within the community of Saints, must necessarily be of a different character than liberal feminism (even that of a somewhat "militant" kind) in the secular world. For liberal feminism does not depend on, nor does it aim for, the existence of community. When I read the books by Sonia Johnson, I see on the one hand a tragedy of a community that could not find a place for a woman who, at least in her own way, did not have as her aim the weakening or destruction of the community. On the other hand, I see the trajectory into the world of the Hobbesian liberal war of all against all, of a rejoining with the secular world—even if, in Johnson's case, this takes a lesbian-separatist form which at best either reconstitutes another closed and somewhat dogmatic community or simply partakes in the secular "freedom" to do one's own thing. (And, please, my aim here is not to be critical of lesbians or even of Sonia Johnson, but to raise the question of possible pathways toward building the community of mutual flourishing.)

It is possible, as some assert, that the Mormon community and its communitarian project still exists, but just not with the Church leadership. It is tempting to think this, just as it is very tempting to think that with Stalin the socialist project had been fundamentally betrayed—not simply led astray and toward a deep impasse. I won't try to deal with this question now; I want to think about it a great deal more and hear what people have to say. It seems to me, however, that we are dealing with an impasse in the advance toward Zion and not a complete betrayal. I believe this, in part, because I see evidence of the Mormon communitarian project everywhere in the Mormon world, especially in Utah, where that world is more concentrated, and I see that most Mormons continue to associate this project, in important respects, with the leaders of the Church.

This leadership tends to react in a paranoid way whenever its authority is questioned; indeed, it often seems that it is the

act of questioning, rather than the *content* of the questioning, that elicits censure. Again, the parallel with Stalin is instructive: the tendency, under conditions of embattlement (or perceived embattlement), is to demand "monolithic unity," "iron discipline," etc. Of course, the parallel cannot be drawn out all the way, because a great deal of diversity exists in the Mormon world (much more than most people on the outside understand). But, what is more, while some secular "freedoms" do not exist in the Mormon world (such as the freedom to put forward *any* intellectual position and yet still remain within the institutional Church), other institutions and practices in the Mormon culture do not exist in the secular world (such as the assurance that one's neighbors will come to one's aid in times of need). I do not say that these aspects of Mormon culture "take the place" of secular "freedoms," because there is no strict comparison: that's a major aspect of the problem here in measuring communitarianism against a liberal scale (or vice-versa).

It must be very frustrating to Mormon intellectuals and "dissidents" that while many of their efforts are aimed at building the community, not trying to make it more secular, they are treated as though they have attacked the community. On the other hand, an element of the "American sense of fair play" trend of thought seems to wish that Mormonism were simply another "religion" (like the RLDS religion, say) in an otherwise secular society. I realize that few Mormon intellectuals and others who appeal to secular values really want this, of course, because it would be the "easiest" thing to accomplish, from a merely secular perspective, by simply leaving the hassles of commitment to community behind. Instead, many Mormon intellectuals seem to be the most dedicated to the community and culture. In my view as an outsider, this dedication to the community demands a recasting of secular language and concepts that Mormon liberals have adopted.¹⁰ For example, what exactly does the demand for academic freedom at Brigham Young University mean? Does it simply mean the



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same thing that it means at any secular university? If so, then what is the point of there being a specifically "Mormon" university?

As a Maoist intellectual, I have some experience with this question that might serve as a useful guide. As a Marxist, what sort of standards should apply to my work as a scholar? Well, I have to provide an alternative to what I'll call for the sake of argument, noting that I try my best not to take a doctrinaire stance on this point, "bourgeois scholarship." This means that, in the presently existing world, I have to compete with such scholarship. But does this simply mean that I try to adhere to the standards of bourgeois scholarship or to go the products of such scholarship "one better," in a quantitative sense? As a matter of fact, the kind of work I do does include this competition in quantitative terms. But, at the same time, the much more important thing is that the *aim* of my scholarship is qualitatively different, and my aim is to contribute to a social project that is qualitatively

different, that is, to contribute to the creation of a qualitatively different society. (Of course, many "bourgeois scholars" also contribute, in one way or another, to this aim so we're not dealing with absolute categories here.) One would think that a specifically Mormon university would be a place for concentrating and developing the intellectual work of the upbuilding of Zion, and that, therefore, "academic freedom" has to be articulated within the context of that project. Why would anyone who would not want to contribute to that project work in such an institution, anyway (other than out of a desire for mere employment)?

The much more important argument, then, is over how that project might be furthered. It is quite possible, obviously, to come into conflict with Church leaders when engaging in that argument—especially when some leaders openly state that it is not up to those outside the leadership to do any thinking with regard to what the project is and how to unfold it. I do indeed know how frustrating this can be; the temptation is to go outside of the community, into liberal "freedom," where "you can

say what you want." But what you say in such circumstances means nothing, because there is no larger project that you will be able to contribute to in liberal secular society; this is *not* a participatory society. Hence, simply following the values of liberalism does not lead a group to a mutually beneficial community; in the end, liberalism becomes an impasse that prevents community because its "I can say what I want to say" philosophy is not tied to the aim of community but to the individual.

What, then, are the post-secular possibilities? Here I can point to only three, and only in an abbreviated way. First, there are traditions within Mormonism that belong to its culture, but which have to be brought back to the surface and rearticulated. This work is proceeding quite well, and I believe that, in the coming years, it will have a transformative effect. Here, the "woman question" (as Marxists traditionally put it) is decisive; its resolution toward real participation and away from the present disrespect and paternalism is quite likely the single most important factor in the restoration of the Restoration. Second, there are prophetic voices within the culture who are respected by the leadership and who also seem to have a deep grasp of the present impasse. Here the work of Hugh Nibley is profound and unsurpassed. He is a brilliant and engaged thinker who should be taken up by all—Mormon or otherwise—who yearn and work for a world beyond the one in which we live. Such voices as Nibley's should be rallying points for the cultural revolution that is needed in the project of constructing Zion.¹¹ Third, and perhaps most difficult, those who fully commit to the project of transforming the world have to ask themselves what they will risk for the sake of this transformation. For the sake of the larger Mormon project of redemptive community, for the sake of moving that project beyond the present impasse, some may have to risk being cut off from the official expression of that project. This doesn't mean that one should foolishly place barriers in the way of dialogue, but it seems to me that, in the larger redemptive scheme of things, all real contributions to the redemptive communitarian project are accounted for and make a difference. This doesn't make the struggle within the unity any easier—if this whole project were an easy one, we'd be living in Zion already.

I believe that many contributions could be made from within (and "out of") the Mormon tradition toward the creation of the community of mutual flourishing. The tragedy would be to see this tradition simply become another appendage of secular society, which has no future, which really does not even have a past, and which may not have a present for much longer. ☞

NOTES

1. The working title for the larger book project is "Mormon Possibilities: A Theory of Community." The book will be divided into thirty sections, themselves divided into five chapters. The present paper is taken from section two. The aim of sections two and three (the latter with the title, "The 'Left Mormons' and the Temptations of Liberalism and Secularism") is to generate a kind of typology of the Mormon world and the surrounding secular world, and to show something of the dialectic between of the two.

2. I analyze the dynamics of the hyper-secular, postmodern capitalist world in my three previous books, *Matrix and Line: Derrida and the Possibilities of*

Postmodern Social Theory (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992), *Humanism and Its Aftermath: The Shared Fate of Deconstruction and Politics* (forthcoming, Humanities Press), and *Politics in the Impasse: Explorations in Postsecular Social Theory* (forthcoming, SUNY Press).

3. Lavina Fielding Anderson, "The LDS Intellectual Community and Church Leadership: A Contemporary Chronology," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* (Spring 1993): 61.

4. Anderson, 61.

5. Orson Scott Card, *Ender's Game* (1985); *Speaker for the Dead* (1986); *Seventh Son* (1987); *Red Prophet* (1988); *Prentice Alvin* (1989); *Xenocide* (1991); all published by Tor, New York.

6. See Marvin S. Hill, *Quest for Refuge: The Mormon Flight from American Pluralism* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989), and Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989). Because I cannot do justice to these studies here, I hasten to add that I, in fact, think these are both very fine and insightful books.

7. See Kenneth H. Winn, *Exiles in the Land of Liberty: Mormons in America, 1830–1846* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989). My interpretation of the "Jeffersonian road" is much influenced by Richard K. Matthews, *The Radical Politics of Thomas Jefferson* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1984).

8. Frederick Engels, *The Peasant War in Germany* (New York: International Publishers, 1966).

9. Frederick Engels, "Working Class Manchester," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed, Robert C. Tucker, ed. (New York: Norton, 1978): 579–85. In terms of the historical experience of the Saints, working-class Manchester receives a dramatic treatment in Orson Scott Card's novel, *Saints* (New York: Tor, 1988).

10. Concerning the question of the "outsider": as an epigraph to the preface of my book, I use a passage from Orson Scott Card where he argues that "[y]ou cannot understand a community if you do not live as a committed member of it." On the whole I agree with this, but I hope that my comments here will at least be understood as coming from a person who is committed to community and the movement to build community.

11. A good place to start would be Hugh Nibley's *Approaching Zion* (Hugh Nibley Collected Works, vol. 9) (Provo/Salt Lake City: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies/Deseret Book, 1989). The title for this article is, of course, taken from that collection. The most recent volume in the Hugh Nibley Collected Works (as of this writing), *Brother Brigham Challenges the Saints* (vol. 13) (Provo/Salt Lake City: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies/Deseret Book, 1994), also contains some of Nibley's most pointed social criticism.



THE SOURCE OF EACH DAY

The source of each day is a narrow point
of darkness in the east, not beautiful
but a little less heavy in the way
it hangs forlornly from the sky. Last night
I danced to thrashy music till my blouse
was salty with sweat. Pleasure's important
but still the day's random facts interest me
more because they have no shame. Someone told me
that sacrifice brings forth blessings of heaven:
perhaps the simplest blessing is loss, one
thing less to own, one thing less to clutter
the vision of an almost frantic soul.

—HOLLY WELKER